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Witchcraft, Gender and Society in Early Modern Germany

By

Jonathan B. Durrant

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ABBREVIATIONS

BundesA ASt Frankfurt	Bundesarchiv Aussenstelle Frankfurt
DiöAE	Diözesanarchiv Eichstätt
ERO	Essex Record Office
StAN	Staatsarchiv Nürnberg

INTRODUCTION

When Margretha Bittelmayr, the wife of a councillor and town scribe of the prince-bishopric of Eichstätt, was arrested for witchcraft on 15 October 1626, she was in her early fifties.[1] Over the next month, she was interrogated by a team of witch commissioners which had been operating in the principality since about 1614. By the time she was executed on 20 November 1626, she had confessed to a familiar range of witch activity: being seduced by the Devil, desecrating the host, making fun of the Virgin, attending witches' sabbaths, performing weather-magic, and exhuming the bodies of dead children.[2] In addition to these witchcraft activities, Bittelmayr confessed to attacking five children (murdering at least four of them), killing three head of cattle, inducing madness in a maid-servant, and scattering her powder on a wall to harm any living thing that went by.[3] She also said that she had entered the cellars, animal stalls and bedrooms of several neighbours to damage property and harm the owners.[4] And she named thirty other Eichstätt inhabitants as her accomplices.[5]

As an older woman, Margretha Bittelmayr would seem to have been a conventional early modern witch. She was certainly typical of her alleged accomplices in the witch sect persecuted in the prince-bishopric and particularly its capital, also called Eichstätt, between 1590 and 1631. During the course of the witch-hunts there, between 240 and 273 people were arrested for witchcraft or, rarely, slandered as witches. Over 85% of them were women (see Table 1). Many of the convicted witches in the territory, regardless of gender, also seem to have been aged forty or more.[6]

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[1] StAN, Hexenakten 45 (M. Bittelmayr), 15 October 1626 (a.m.).

[2] Ibid., 15 October (p.m.), 16 October (a.m. and p.m.), 23, 24, 26, and 27 October, and 9 and 10 November 1626.

[3] Ibid., 17 October (a.m. and p.m.), 19 and 21 October 1626.

[4] Ibid., 12 and 13 November 1626.

[5] Ibid., 29, 30 and 31 October, and 2, 5, 6 and 7 November 1626.

[6] It is not possible to give a precise age for every witch-suspect, even though each one was asked by the interrogators when he or she was born (StAN, Hexenakten 49 (Interrogatory), Question 2—see Appendix 1 "The Interrogatory of 1617"). In many cases the *inquisitio* no longer exists or that part which records the age, being near the beginning of the document and therefore most vulnerable to damage, is missing. Several suspects were certainly under forty years old when they were arrested: the brothers Georg and Enders Gutmann and Maria Mayr were in their twenties (StAN, Hexenakten 48 (G. Gutmann), 13 December 1617 (p.m.), (E. Gutmann), 14 December 1617 (a.m.), and (M. Mayr), 23

Bittelmayr and the other Eichstätt witches would therefore seem to have been German counterparts of Margery Stanton, the exemplar of the typical witch cited by Keith Thomas, or Barbe Mallebarbe, the sixty-year-old witch of Charmes whose 'familiar' story sets the scene for Robin Briggs's *Witches and Neighbours* (1996).[7] Not only were they generally old and female like these witches, but they confessed to committing the same range of harm against their neighbours' bodies, children, property and livestock.[8]

Table 1. Numbers of women and men suspected of witchcraft in the prince-bishopric of Eichstätt, 1590–1631.[9]

	Women		Men		Unknown sex	
Year	Min.	Max.	Min.	Max.	Min.	Max.
1590–2	19	26	–	–	–	–
1593–1602	7	8	2	2	–	2
1603	20	20	–	–	–	–
1604–16	10	10	–	1	–	–
1617–31	155	172	27	32	–	–
Total	211 (88%)	236 (86%)	29 (12%)	35 (13%)	–	2 (1%)

June 1618 (p.m.)); and Margretha Geiger, Valtin Lanng, Anna Wunder and Walburga Knab were in their thirties (ibid., (M. Geiger), 22 March 1618 (a.m.), (V. Lanng), 23 March 1618 (a.m.), (A. Wunder), 9 July 1620 (a.m.), and (StAN, Hexenakten 45 (W. Knab), 29 July 1621 (a.m.)). Statements of age and years of marriage in the *inquisitiones* or *relationes*, the existence of adult children, references to being 'old' (although this usually meant 'the elder' rather than being an indication of age), and references to events that had happened to an individual some years before her interrogation, suggest that most of the Eichstätt suspects were over forty.

[7] Keith Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic* (1971; repr. London: Penguin Books, 1991), pp. 662–3; and Robin Briggs, *Witches and Neighbours: The Social and Cultural Context of Witchcraft* (London: HarperCollins, 1996), pp. 17–19. Briggs claims that whilst Barbe cannot be regarded as a typical witch because no witch was typical, her story was a familiar one (p. 19).

[8] Children and livestock bore the brunt of Stanton's aggression according to *A Detection of damnable Driftes* (London, 1579), reprinted in Marion Gibson (ed.), *Early Modern Witches: Witchcraft Cases in Contemporary Writing* (London: Routledge, 2000), pp. 41–9 (here pp. 45–8), although she was only tried for killing a gelding and a cow (*Calendar of Assize Records: Essex Indictments: Elizabeth I*, ed. J.S. Cockburn (London: HMSO, 1978), 1063). Barbe's catalogue of injury and murder included more adult victims than Stanton or Bittelmayr, but her ire was effectively directed at livestock and children too, Briggs, *Witches and Neighbours*, p. 18.

[9] Fuller details are given in "Appendix 1: Distribution of witch trials in Eichstätt:

Explaining the vulnerability of older women to accusations of witchcraft in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries has preoccupied historians for the past four decades. A common functionalist interpretation of this vulnerability, drawn from the work of Keith Thomas and Alan Macfarlane, is that a witchcraft accusation was symptomatic of a prior enmity between the alleged witch (generally a woman who existed on the margins of society) and her victims which could no longer be resolved through traditional means.[10] In this context, one might argue that Bittelmayr's confessions of harmful witchcraft reveal that she was not at peace with her neighbours. As this witchcraft was directed primarily at children, cattle and a single woman, one could also argue that, like Ursula Grön in Augsburg, Bittelmayr had come to embody contemporary fears about the sexual rapacity of crones and their desire to destroy fertility and new life.[11] Given the conjunction of the agrarian crises, epidemic diseases, inflationary cycles and political instability which beset Europe at this time, one might further claim that Bittelmayr's trial had become a metaphor for the ills of contemporary society.[12] I do not think, however, that Bittelmayr or the other Eichstätt witches were very much like Stanton, Barbe or Grön. That they were all older women is largely coincidental. Nor do I think that they were prosecuted either as scapegoats for the misfortunes which had plunged Europe into crisis or as a means of exorcising the hag-ridden nightmares which apparently disturbed early modern Europeans.

One of the problems of much witchcraft historiography, especially that available in English, is the tendency to concentrate on individual trials and small-scale witch panics rather than systematically examining large-scale witch-hunts. By large-scale hunts, I do not mean episodes of prosecution involving the rather low figure of ten or more arrests popularized by Brian Levack.[13] If one compares supposed local witch

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gender", in Jonathan Durrant, "Witchcraft, Gender and Society in the Early Modern Prince-bishopric of Eichstätt" (PhD thesis, University of London, 2002), pp. 298–303. The table includes cases which did not end in the execution of the suspect.

[10] Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic*, pp. 672–4, and Alan Macfarlane, *Witchcraft in Tudor and Stuart England: A Regional and Comparative Study* (1970; 2nd ed., London: Routledge, 1999), pp. 192–8.

[11] On Grön as an archetypal old crone, see Lyndal Roper, *Witch Craze: Terror and Fantasy in Baroque Germany* (London: Yale University Press, 2004), pp. 170–2.

[12] Wolfgang Behringer claims that witch persecution might be seen as a metaphor for these ills in "Weather, Hunger and Fear: Origins of the European Witch Hunts in Climate, Society and Mentality", *German History*, 13 (1995), pp. 1–27 (p. 27).

[13] Brian P. Levack, *The Witch-hunt in Early Modern Europe* (2nd ed., London: Longman, 1995), p. 174.

sects to other marginalized groups persecuted by early modern authorities—recusants, gypsies or vagrants, for example—this figure appears small in scale. In 1582, the year in which the Essex magistrate Brian Darcy conducted his witch-hunt in St Osyth and its neighbouring villages, sixty-two other inhabitants of the county were presented at just one of the many quarter sessions for non-attendance at church, many of them known recusants with strong connections to one another.[14] This figure dwarfs the total number of suspected witch-felons (just ten, most arrested on Darcy's authority) tried at both Essex assizes of that year.[15] I mean, rather, the hunts in Cologne and Westphalia, Würzburg, Bamberg, Ellwangen or Eichstätt in which hundreds of people found themselves arrested and executed for witchcraft over a short span of time.

The historiographical problem with smaller witchcraft episodes is that they involved fewer people. It was clear to contemporaries how Stanton, Barbe, Grön or the witches prosecuted in St Osyth were situated in their communities.[16] The witchcraft narratives produced during the investigations and trials were consequently relatively coherent and detailed. It is therefore a fairly straightforward exercise to locate the conflicts which produced the accusations of witchcraft and identify the agenda of the local hostile authority, like Darcy or the *prévôt* of Charmes, who helped pursue the witch or witches. Once the witch had been prosecuted (although not always convicted), the panic tended to dissipate providing a very clear end to the story.[17] Much of our understanding of the persecution of witches, especially their emergence at this moment in history and the predominance of women among the accused, rests on these studies of isolated cases, and interpretations

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[14] ERO, Q/SR 79/100 and 81/31.

[15] *Calendar of Assize Records: Essex Indictments: Elizabeth I*, 1300–1341 *passim*.

[16] Despite the existence of W.W.'s extensive pamphlet, *A true and just Recorde, of the Information, Examination and Confession of all the Witches, taken at S. Oses in the countie of Essex* (London, 1582; repr. in Gibson (ed.), *Early Modern Witches*, pp. 75–124), and various sessional, assize and contextual sources in the Essex and Public Record Offices, a thorough analysis of the St. Osyth trials is wanting. The witches' confessions as reported in the pamphlet have, however, been used as examples in the work of Deborah Willis, *Malevolent Nurture: Witch-hunting and Maternal Power in Early Modern England* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1996), pp. 36–7, 57–9 and 85–8, and Diane Purkiss, *The Witch in History: Early Modern and Twentieth-century Representations* (London: Routledge, 1996), pp. 104–5 and 167–70.

[17] Thomas does not alert his readers to the failure to successfully prosecute Stanton, but this is noted by Macfarlane, *Witchcraft in Tudor and Stuart England*, p. 83.

drawn from these studies have found their way into some recent work on the larger German witchcraft episodes. Rainer Walz's typology of conflict for the Lippe experience of witch persecution, for example, is firmly grounded in the work of Macfarlane and Thomas, and expands it in ways which mirror developments in witchcraft scholarship in Britain and the United States.[18] It is clear from these latter studies of witchcraft in places like Rye and Salem, as well as Lyndal Roper's and David Sabean's work on German material, that the conflicts which might have led to accusations of witchcraft need not have been located in a refusal of charity or the failure to meet traditional social obligations. They could also have been located in personal psychological or wider political or religious tensions.[19]

A variety of approaches to the study of witch persecution in different national historiographies can only promote a deeper understanding of this complex phenomenon. The dominance of perspectives which focus on small episodes of witch prosecution and the conflicts which precipitated them has, however, tended to obscure the fact that most witchcraft narratives were not so easily packaged. Most witches, for example, were *not* accused by the alleged victims of their harmful magic. Three women in the prince-bishopric of Eichstätt, a mistress and her maid and an unfortunate neighbour, were certainly arrested on the basis of accusations which followed neighbourly conflict, and a handful of other trials which were not directly related to the main phases of persecution in the territory may have originated in similar circumstances.[20] Although one cannot now reconstruct the sequence of

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[18] Walz's typology is discussed and contextualized in his *Hexenglaube und magische Kommunikation im Dorf der Frühen Neuzeit: Die Verfolgungen in der Grafschaft Lippe* (Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 1993), pp. 1–65.

[19] On Rye, see Annabel Gregory, "Witchcraft, Politics and 'Good Neighbourhood' in Early Modern Rye", *Past and Present*, 133 (1991), pp. 31–66. The classic account of the Salem trials is Paul Boyer and Stephen Nissenbaum, *Salem Possessed: The Social Origins of Witchcraft* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1976). On personal tensions, see Lyndal Roper, "Witchcraft and Fantasy in Early Modern Germany" and "Oedipus and the Devil", both in ead., *Oedipus and the Devil: Witchcraft, Sexuality and Religion in Early Modern Europe* (London: Routledge, 1994), pp. 199–225 and 226–48 respectively, and David Warren Sabean, "The Sacred Bond of Unity: Community through the Eyes of a Thirteen-Year-Old Witch (1683)", in id., *Power in the Blood: Popular Culture and Village Discourse in Early Modern Germany* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), pp. 94–112.

[20] StAN, Hexenakten 48 (A. Widman of Berching) and (K. Pronner), and Hochstift Eichstätt Literalien 298, ff. 131r–v. The wisewoman Magdalena Pößl who had identified the alleged witch in this latter case was reported by the *Hofrat* (court council) to the authorities of the district of Obermässing, but her fate is not known.

events which led to the Eichstätt persecutions in 1590 and their resumption in 1603 and again in 1617, it remains possible that one or other phase could have been initiated by an accusation of witchcraft rooted in neighbourly tension. The 'witch' slanders alleged by Hans Bühler and Hans Frech suggest that neighbours were also able to manipulate local fears of the witch in their disputes.[21] As far as one can tell, however, the vast majority of the Eichstätt witch-suspects, like Margretha Bittelmayr, were denounced by other witches under interrogation and convicted on the basis of their own confessions produced under torture.[22] These confession narratives reflected the anxiety of the witch-suspects struggling to understand the situation in which they found themselves. This situation did not correspond to any preconceptions they may have had about the stereotypical characteristics of witches and how they came to be accused because they were 'middling sort' women who had been caught up in pure heresy trials rather than the isolated witch episodes commonly recounted in pamphlet literature. Unsurprisingly, the witches' testimonies were frequently confused and contradictory.

If the local inhabitants of Eichstätt rarely brought accusations of witchcraft, they also refused the role of witnesses against their suspected neighbours. Very few witnesses were brought before the witch commissioners in Eichstätt to testify to the truth of the witches' stories of harm, and those who did appear before them invariably failed to corroborate the suspects' narratives. On the other hand, family members and neighbours did attempt to help and support the witch-suspects through the provision of food, drink, company and messages of good will. The Eichstätt situation does not therefore correspond to other examples of witch-heresy trials, like those in the Basque region, where the local population helped foment panic.[23] The same may be argued of the terrible persecutions in Ellwangen, Würzburg and Bamberg, all territories which had close political and religious connections to Eichstätt, despite the tendency of some of the historians of these episodes to dwell

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[21] These slanders are discussed in Peter Oestmann, *Hexenprozesse am Reichskammergericht* (Cologne: Böhlau, 1997), pp. 562 and 565.

[22] Bittelmayr had been denounced by twenty convicted witches and one suspect who was still in custody when she was arrested, StAN, Hexenakten 45 (M. Bittelmayr), 15 October 1626 (a.m.).

[23] For a summary of the witch persecutions in the Basque region, including the role of villagers in forcing confessions, for example, see "Part One: The Context" in *The Salazar Documents: Inquisitor Alonso de Salazar Frías and Others on the Basque Witch Persecution*, ed. Gustav Henningsen (Leiden: Brill, 2004), pp. 46–81.

on the few instances of harm which they inevitably encompassed.[24] In these circumstances one cannot simply assume that the witches' tales of harmful magic were rooted in real social conflicts, either in Eichstätt or elsewhere, or that these particular women were denounced because they embodied the characteristics of the frightful old crone.

Reading and understanding the confused and dislocated confession narratives produced during the Eichstätt witch persecutions is made more difficult by the fragmentary survival of the interrogation transcripts and other contextual sources. Much of this material will be discussed in detail in the following two chapters because an analysis of it is pertinent to the reconstruction of the background and course of the witch persecutions in the principality. Briefly, however, the material consists of two interrogatories, one from 1611 and another created in about 1617 (of which there are two copies), a quantity of interrogation transcripts and related material (abstracted information, judgements and sentences) mostly produced between the end of 1617 and the summer of 1631, periodic lists of witches who had been executed, and lists of denunciations laid against a few named individuals. Alongside a number of wills and a handful of bills submitted by the executioner, there also exist a bundle of correspondence relating to the legality of Maria Magdalena Windteis's incarceration for witchcraft and substantial material generated during an investigation into the treatment of Maria Mayr in custody. All of this material is contained in the fascicles Hexenakten 42–49 held in the Staatsarchiv in Nuremberg. Other material includes a register of felonies (the "Urfehdebuch") which runs from early 1603 to late August 1627, and registers of baptisms, marriages and deaths from the period 1589–1618 which were accurately collated and cross-referenced towards the middle of the twentieth century by

[24] On the Ellwangen trials, see Wolfgang Mährle, "'O wehe der armen seelen'. Hexenverfolgungen in der Fürstpropstei Ellwangen (1588–1694)", in Johannes Dillinger, Thomas Fritz and Wolfgang Mährle, *Zum Feuer Verdammt. Die Hexenverfolgungen in der Grafschaft Hohenberg, der Reichsstadt Reutlingen und der Fürstpropstei Ellwangen* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 1998), pp. 325–500, H.C. Erik Midelfort, *Witch Hunting in Southwestern Germany 1562–1684: The Social and Intellectual Foundations* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1972), pp. 98–112, and Wolfgang Behringer, *Hexenverfolgung in Bayern. Volksmagie, Glaubenseifer und Staatsräson in der Frühen Neuzeit* (3rd ed., Munich: R. Oldenbourg, 1987), pp. 224–9. Friedrich Merzbacher, *Die Hexenprozesse in Franken* (2nd ed., Munich: Beck, 1970) covers both Würzburg and Bamberg, whilst the persecutions in the latter prince-bishopric are the subject of Britta Gehm, *Die Hexenverfolgung im Hochstift Bamberg und das Eingreifen des Reichshofrates zu ihrer Beendigung* (Hildesheim: Olms, 2000).

Franz Xaver Buchner.[25] There is at present insufficient material on the witch commissioners who interrogated the suspects in Eichstätt in the 1610s and 1620s. About ninety interrogation transcripts survive in complete or substantial form for the period from 1617; the suspect cannot, unfortunately, be adequately identified in all cases. The large quantity of prosopographical information contained in the trial transcripts and other material does, however, allow the partial reconstruction of the complex networks of kin, neighbours and friends enjoyed by the witch-suspects and their families.

In this book, I concentrate on the trial transcripts from 1617. This is because only one transcript survives for each of the two earlier phases of persecution (1590–2 and 1603). Generally, the interrogations followed the pattern of the interrogatory, but the witch commissioners had to deviate from this framework when a suspect proved reluctant to continue, retracted part or all of her confession, or began to tell of her heretical or criminal acts out of sequence. The problems inherent in reading the confused narratives of the suspects, particularly at the beginning of a trial, and in the uneven survival of the sources are compounded by the fragmentary nature of the confession narratives. These were produced over periods of time ranging from a few weeks to a decade and were not therefore always logical or coherent. All of the narratives were also constrained by the assumption of guilt and the emphasis on reproducing the story of heresy and harm familiar to the witch commissioners from their reading of contemporary demonology.

What is clear from the surviving material is that the stories of diabolical seduction, the descriptions of the sabbath and the tales of malevolence confessed by the Eichstätt witch-suspects were the products of their own imaginations and their diabolizations of ordinary experiences of village or small-town life. Confession narratives produced in this way cannot be read like freely-given accusation narratives because they represent not accounts of real episodes of alleged malevolent witchcraft located in actual conflicts, but the fantasy and knowledge of the witch-suspect under duress. This knowledge could have been gained from a vast array of sources: the leading questions of the interrogators; the sentences publicly pronounced on other convicted witches; the sermons commonly delivered at times of persecution; the gossip circulating about

[25] Franz Xaver Buchner, "Eichstätter Familienbuch 1589–1618" (compiled 1930s–1950s).

the suspects and their activities; and the pamphlets, broadsheets and plays which publicized sensational stories.[26] The analysis of the witches' own statements produced for the interrogators requires a fundamentally different methodology to that generally adopted in the reading of the witness depositions. I have drawn on the historical anthropology developed by David Sabean in *Power in the Blood* (1984) which allows one to focus on an analysis of the language used by the witch-suspects rather than the function of the witch-accusation in order to get beyond the conventional narrative of conflict.

In the first section of this book, I reconstruct the dynamics of witch prosecution in the prince-bishopric of Eichstätt and consequently the ways in which the suspects constructed convincing narratives of witchcraft activity. In this section, I also describe the types of people who were arrested for witchcraft in the principality. As I have noted already, many of those prosecuted for witchcraft in the territory were older women like Margretha Bittelmayr, but that is not the whole story. They tended to be women, also like Bittelmayr, from households which were highly integrated into the secular political structure of the town of Eichstätt. They also tended to be closely related through kinship, client-patron and friendship networks. This high level of integration sets the women arrested in Eichstätt apart from their contemporaries in Essex, Lorraine or Augsburg. Their predominance among the denounced witches demands an explanation, but the current analyses of the gender and age of the stereotypical witch seem insufficient for this case because they rely on an image of the witch as marginalized and easily targeted. A political and economic analysis of the context of the persecutions in Eichstätt does not provide any clues for the presence of these women either. The disproportionate numbers of female witches could only have resulted, I will argue, from the aggressive implementation of the Catholic Reformation by a zealous group of clergymen around the

[26] In London, for example, theatre audiences and readers had a broad range of images of witches and other magic practitioners to draw on in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, among them Marlowe's *Dr Faustus* (late sixteenth century), Shakespeare's *Macbeth* (c. 1606), and the play *The Witch of Edmonton* (1621) based on Henry Goodcole's pamphlet *The wonderfull discovery of Elizabeth Sawyer, a Witch* (London, 1621; repr. in Gibson, *Early Modern Witches*, pp. 299–315). On the construction of plausible testimony in letters of remission, see Natalie Zemon Davis, *Fiction in the Archives: Pardon Tales and Their Tellers in Sixteenth-century France* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1987), and in murder trials, see Malcolm Gaskill, "Reporting Murder: Fiction in the Archives in Early Modern England", *Social History*, 23 (1998), pp. 1–30.

figure of Prince-bishop Johann Christoph von Westerstetten (r. 1612–37). Witch persecution was one method among many deployed to bring the subjects of the bishop back within the fold of orthodox Catholicism.

Analysis of the individuals denounced as witches also offers a further intriguing set of data. A considerable number of men were named among the alleged accomplices of each witch. Margretha Bittelmayr's list of thirty accomplices included the names of twelve men.[27] In two cases, men accounted for over 70% of the accomplices allegedly seen at the witches' sabbaths.[28] Yet the proportion of men among those arrested for the crime was only about 12% (see Table 1). The witches under interrogation were not resorting to a stereotype of the old female witch when asked to name their accomplices. One has to ask why they failed to do so when the image of the old crone was, according to Lyndal Roper, prevalent at this time.[29] One also has to ask why the witch commissioners failed to treat denunciations of male and female witches equally, even though they diligently recorded and sometimes cross-referenced and tabulated the denunciations laid against alleged male accomplices.[30]

In the second section of the book, I examine in detail the networks of association which are to be found in the witch interrogations and confirmed in prosopographical research. Too often studies of witchcraft episodes miss the opportunity to interrogate their sources for information about everyday experiences, particularly those of women, in early modern Europe. They seek to explain the rise and decline of witch persecution, the contexts of individual accusations, and the proportion of women among those accused of witchcraft. These are important areas of research, but what they tell us of early modern life is limited. We have a set of circumstances, for example, which may have led to episodes of witch prosecution, but did not usually do so. Even in Eichstätt only four of the nineteen administrative districts

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[27] StAN, Hexenakten 45 (M. Bittelmayr), 29–31 October and 2 and 5–7 November 1626.

[28] StAN, Hexenakten 45 (P. Porzin), 20 and 22–25 September 1627, and (H. Stigeliz), 23–25 and 27 May 1628.

[29] Roper, *Witch Craze*, p. 162.

[30] The secretary to the *Hofrat*, Paul Gabler, was the subject of at least twenty-two denunciations listed and tabulated in three documents by the witch commissioners, StAN, Hexenakten 43 (P. Gabler—denunciations), 48 (P. Gabler—denunciations) and 49 (P. Gabler—table of denunciations). Gabler was never arrested. He did, however, attend at least one session of witch interrogation, StAN, Hexenakten 45 (P. Porzin), 10 September 1627 (a.m.).

experienced witch persecution on any scale.[31] We also have a confused and contested set of explanations why women were more likely to be accused of witchcraft.[32] The general comments about mentalities in early modern society and culture which conclude these studies tend to be framed negatively because the narratives which make up witchcraft prosecutions had to be presented to and by the witch hunters in that way. Although the existence of agrarian and fairy cults and sorcerers are acknowledged on the peripheries of Europe, early modern society at its centre and to the west seems inflexibly uniform.[33] It is portrayed as a world of rigid social and moral boundaries upheld by law, religion and custom. Most people it appears bought into this world out of necessity and projected their fears of disorder onto witches as they also did onto vagrants and marauding soldiers. In presenting witchcraft episodes negatively, however, historians have merely read the court records in the way that accusers, judges, theologians and pamphleteers wanted them to be read. Accusers wanted justice, judges wanted clear convictions, theologians wanted to eradicate a heretical sect, and pamphleteers wanted to sell stories which resonated in the market-place. But the witches' narratives were never so clear-cut. They had to balance the knowledge of their innocence with sometimes unbearable psychological and physical pressure brought to bear during an interrogation.

Whilst the suspected witches told conventional stories of harmful magic and witchcraft activity, they had to ground their narratives in real relationships and events for them to be sustainable over the many weeks and sometimes months or years of an interrogation. They also had to be plausible to the witch commissioners, if not to the suspects themselves. The leading questions of the commissioners forced the suspects

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[31] The intensity of persecution in different parts of Europe is demonstrated neatly in Table 4.5 "The severity of witch-hunting in Europe" in Wolfgang Behringer, *Witches and Witch-Hunts: A Global History* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2004), p. 150.

[32] The range of explanations why women bore the brunt of the witch persecutions is too broad to summarize here. A useful discussion of the limitations of these explanations may be found in Lara Apps and Andrew Gow, *Male Witches in Early Modern Europe* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003), pp. 25–42.

[33] Early examples from an increasingly broad literature include Carlo Ginzburg, *Ecstasies: Deciphering the Witches' Sabbath*, trans. Raymond Rosenthal; ed. Gregory Elliott (London: Hutchinson Radius, 1990); and Gustav Henningsen, "'The Ladies from Outside': An Archaic Pattern of the Witches' Sabbath", and Antero Heikkinen and Timo Kervinen, "Finland: The Male Domination", both in Bengt Ankarloo and Gustav Henningsen (eds.), *Early Modern European Witchcraft: Centres and Peripheries* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), pp. 191–215 and 319–38 respectively.

to describe experiences of acrimonious neighbourhood disputes, but we should not be seduced into thinking that they inevitably drew on real episodes of conflict in the construction of their narratives. The relationships which emerge from the Eichstätt witch-trial transcripts were, in fact, mostly positive. These positive experiences can be reconstructed in part from the kinship and godparentage networks which can be traced through the baptismal and marriage registers for the town of Eichstätt. They are confirmed by examining the language used by the witches in their confessions to describe their relationships with their neighbours and the activities they engaged in together. For each of the Eichstätt witches, the final summarized confession (the *Urgicht* or *relatio*) written up in the "Urfehdebuch" provides basic details ranging from name, marital status, age and husband's status to the number of denunciations laid against her by other suspects and the crimes of which she was convicted. In most of the cases where substantial or complete records of interrogation exist, they still include the *inquisitio*, the transcript of verbal exchanges between the suspect and the commissioners written up after each session of interrogation. How soon after each session one cannot know, but it is likely that the scribes were anxious to complete the record as soon as possible. The *inquisitiones* were working documents which contained the denials, confessions, revocations, recapitulations, supplementary questions, exclamations of pain during torture and later scribal annotations; they were used as the point of reference for future interrogations which may well have recommenced after lunch or early the following day.[34] It was therefore necessary to have them to hand. One can assume therefore that the degree of contamination by the authors of the *inquisitio* was not as great as in the edited *relatio*. There must have been some errors of mistranscription or memory (although very few are apparent in the extant transcripts), and demonological language was sometimes inserted where a colloquial word or phrase had probably been used by the defendant. It is doubtful, for example, that a suspect would have consistently used 'maleficia' for her alleged acts of harm. The main influence the commissioners and the scribe would have had on the witches' confessions would have been in shap-

[34] Margretha Bittelmayr was arrested on Thursday 15 October 1626 and experienced morning and afternoon sessions of interrogation on that day and the two following days. Sunday was always a day of rest for the commissioners, but the questioning resumed on the Monday, StAN, Hexenakten 45 (M. Bittelmayr), 15–17 (a.m. and p.m.) and 19 December 1626.

ing the testimony according to the interrogatory, the list of standard questions asked of all the defendants, and the supplementary questions they decided to insert into the interrogation to clarify elements of the narrative.[35] Simply answering the questions with 'yes', 'no', 'so many times' and so on would not have made a convincing confession narrative. What the interrogators wanted and pressed for was detail, and that detail remains in the extant *inquisitiones*. It is personal and frequently unique and it is the basis for the four chapters which tease out the quality of the relationships which the witch-suspects had with each other and with their kin and neighbours.

As well as being generally positive, the witches' relationships with their neighbours reveal a dynamic rather than passively gendered society. As we might expect, men tended to associate with other men, and women with other women, outside the confines of the household. Yet they did not always do so in ways which conformed to either the prescriptions of patriarchy or the social theology of the reformist Catholic clergy. Men of the secular political elite seem to have engaged regularly in drinking with their peers rather than accepting social norms and curfews which militated against drunkenness. Their wives and daughters seem to have been similarly unconstrained by normative behaviour. Rather than teaching sexual continence and driving unwed mothers away, these women facilitated sexual liaisons among unmarried young people and helped pregnant young women procure abortions. Margretha Bittelmayr even confessed to having a sexual relationship with another woman before she met her husband.[36] As Laura Gowing has observed, the problem of women's consent to and desire for sex is 'one of words and texts'.[37] A woman's sexual point of view was almost always articulated in ways which wrote women's agency out of the sexual narrative or equated it with whoredom or witchcraft. Despite this observation, however, Gowing's study remains fundamentally an analysis of deep early modern anxieties about sex which were apparently shared by women and men. Most early modern women it seems were unable to articulate their enjoyment of sex outside of marriage and on the few occasions when, like Agnes Baker, they did present themselves as sexually

[35] Two copies of the interrogatory used from about 1617 exist, StAN, Hexenakten 49 (Interrogatory, working copy) and (Interrogatory, fair copy).

[36] StAN, Hexenakten 45 (M. Bittelmayr), 16 October 1626.

[37] Laura Gowing, *Common Bodies: Women, Touch and Power in Seventeenth-century England* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2003), pp. 82–3.

active, they were censured by the authorities.[38] The Eichstätt witch-trial documentation, because it did not concern itself with fornication and adultery directly, reveals a less anxious view of sexual behaviour at the level of the 'middling sort'. This view is reinforced by the presence of probable concubines in priestly households and the failure of couples of local elite status to get married properly. Whilst honour and patriarchy were important to the structure of early modern legislation and behaviour generally, personality, agency and the proximity of families which had lived alongside one another for generations seem to have softened attitudes towards the indiscretions and lifestyles of one's more intimate neighbours.

Not all of the relationships which emerge from the trial records were so positive. It would be unusual to find a society in which petty disagreements and clashes of personality did not manifest themselves during a witch persecution on the scale of the one which afflicted Eichstätt. A minority of witches did not always maintain good relations with their neighbours, but that does not mean that they were inevitably suspected of witchcraft. As I will argue, these bad relationships had little bearing on the course of the witch persecutions. There is, however, another more serious set of negative relationships which was identified and investigated by the witch commissioners. Early in the course of their persecution of the witch sect, the commissioners uncovered the abuse of the witch-prisoners by their warders. One might expect this abuse to occur against prisoners remanded for secular crimes, such as theft, but the abuse of the Eichstätt witch-suspects is troubling. Later medieval and early modern demonologists were ambiguous about the powers retained by the witch after she fell into the hands of justice. On the one hand, Heinrich Kramer argued that the witch lost all her powers when she was arrested. On the other, he was careful to note the danger of acceding to a convicted witch's request to place a foot on the ground before the execution in case her powers returned and she killed many people.[39] There remained a possibility therefore that the incarcerated witch might harm those around her. Yet the Eichstätt warders regularly,

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[38] Ibid., p. 104.

[39] Heinrich Kramer (Institoris), *Der Hexenhammer: Malleus Maleficarum*, trans. Wolfgang Behringer, Günter Jerouschek and Werner Tschacher (Munich: Deutscher Taschen Verlag, 2000), III/2, 8, p. 652. This translation is a considerable improvement on Montague Summers's English translation *Malleus Maleficarum: The Classic Study of Witchcraft* (1928) and is used in this book because of its accuracy.

and by their own confessions, verbally tormented, physically assaulted and sexually abused the witch-suspects in their charge.[40] Why they ran the risks of harm from the witch and punishment from the witch commissioners is a question which needs to be asked.

The commissioners had been alerted to the possible abuse of the warders' custodial powers by Maria Mayr's confession that she had 'gotten pregnant'.[41] It is unlikely that they expected to uncover anything more than a simple case of corruption. Apart from the systematic abuse of prisoners, however, the commissioners soon discovered that some neighbours regularly attempted to maintain contact with the suspects (despite the risks to themselves), and that Maria's pregnancy had apparently been planned by her husband Georg, a former court scribe, with the help of the wife of the town hall caretaker and one of the bedwatchers who worked in the town hall at night. If she could prove herself pregnant, Maria would have been spared further torture and may well have hoped to secure a pardon, if not an acquittal. Maria's case is the subject of the final chapter of this book.

[40] StAN, Hexenakten 48 (Hans), (W. Huetter), (J. and B. Halm), (Anderle), (Bartle) and (L. Fendt).

[41] StAN, Hexenakten 48 (M. Mayr—investigation), 23 November 1618 (a.m.).

PART I

CHAPTER ONE

WITCH-HUNTING IN EICHSTÄTT

The background

Between 1590 and 1631 there were three phases of witch persecution in the prince-bishopric of Eichstätt: from 1590 to 1592; in 1603; and between 1617 and 1631. Wolfgang Behringer has estimated that over 400 people were executed for the crime of witchcraft in the territory over this period.[1] Although the records for the two earlier and smaller waves of witch persecution are incomplete, this figure would appear to be an overestimate of between 150 and 200. Sigmund Riezler's nineteenth-century estimate of up to 274 executions based on an anonymous report by an Eichstätt witch commissioner (identified by Behringer as Dr Wolfgang Kolb) seems more accurate.[2] My own estimate is that between 217 and 256 executions of witch-heretics were carried out in Eichstätt in just forty years.[3] The inhabitants of this sparsely-populated territory in Middle Franconia therefore experienced a relatively intense witch-hunt and both contemporaries and modern scholars have found the events worthy of note. In an opinion on witches addressed to Wilhelm V of Bavaria, Gregory of Valencia SJ cited the Eichstätt interrogations, alongside those in the bishopric of Augsburg, as examples which the Bavarian authorities should follow.[4] Gregory's opinion has led Behringer

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[1] Wolfgang Behringer, "'Erhob sich das ganze Land zu ihrer Ausrottung . . .' Hexenprozesse und Hexenverfolgungen in Europa", in Richard van Dülmen (ed.), *Hexenwelten. Magie und Imagination* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 1987), pp. 131–69 (p. 164).

[2] Sigmund [von] Riezler, *Geschichte der Hexenprozesse in Bayern. Im Lichte der allgemeinen Entwicklung dargestellt* (1896; 2nd ed. edited by Friedrich Merzbacher, 1968; repr. Stuttgart: Magnus, n.d. [c. 1997]), p. 226. Gerhard Schormann states that there were over 200 victims of the Eichstätt persecutions between 1590 and 1632, *Hexenprozesse in Deutschland* (2nd ed., Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1986), p. 70. Behringer names Kolb in *Hexenverfolgung in Bayern*, p. 226.

[3] A detailed discussion of how I came to my estimates can be found in Durrant, "Witchcraft, Gender and Society", pp. 62–7.

[4] Wolfgang Behringer (ed.), *Hexen und Hexenprozesse in Deutschland* (Munich: Deutscher Taschen Verlag, 1988), pp. 213–14 ("132. Gregor von Valentia SJ: Grundsatzgutachten der Juristischen und Theologischen Fakultät der Universität Ingolstadt, 1590").

to conclude that the prince-bishopric of Eichstätt was a 'regional motor' of the Franconian and Bavarian waves of witch persecution.[5]

Unlike the witch persecutions in the northern Franconian prince-bishoprics, however, the Eichstätt experience has not been the focus of a detailed study.[6] The prosecutions in Würzburg and Bamberg were certainly dramatic, even by early modern standards, and it is this aspect of them which has attracted historians and, rightly, demands an explanation. The quality and detail of the source material has also aided research into these persecutions. Although the trials in Franconia, including Eichstätt, and Swabian Ellwangen have been regarded together as 'the absolute peak of persecution in south Germany',[7] the vast majority of witch-burnings in this region took place in Würzburg and Bamberg (about 1200 and 900 respectively).[8] These persecutions included the dramatic interrogations and executions of the several hundred children from the Julius-Spital, the school and orphanage in Würzburg.[9] Interest in the persecutions in Bamberg has been promoted by the trials of Georg Haan, a chancellor of the principality, his wife and two of their

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[5] Behringer, *Hexenverfolgung in Bayern*, p. 162. Earlier in the same work he made the observation that the persecutions in Eichstätt and the other Franconian prince-bishoprics 'zu den schlimmsten Exzessen der europäischen Geschichte gehören' ('were among the worst excesses of European history', ibid., p. 27). In this he echoes W.G. Soldan who wrote that Eichstätt played 'eine besonders traurige Rolle' ('an especially sad role') in the witch persecutions, *Geschichte der Hexenprozesse*, vol. 2 (1843; rev. Heinrich Heppe, 1879; rev. and ed. Max Bauer, 1912; 3rd ed. repr. Cologne: Parkland, 1999), p. 54.

[6] Studies which concentrate exclusively on aspects of the Eichstätt witch trials are limited in scope. They include: Adam Hirschmann, "Johann Reichard. Ein Sittenbild aus dem Zeitalter der Hexenverfolgungen", *Historisch-Politische Blätter*, 161 (1918), pp. 676–81; Friedrich Merzbacher, "Das 'alte Halsgerichtsbuch' des Hochstifts Eichstätt. Eine archivalische Quelle zur Geschichte des Strafvollzuges im 15. und 16. Jahrhundert und zur rechtlichen Volkskunde", *Zeitschrift der Savigny-Stiftung für Rechtsgeschichte. Germanische Abteilung*, 73 (1956), pp. 375–96; Ruth Gänstaller, "Zur Geschichte des Hexenwahns: Der Fall Barbara Reuterin in Eichstätt" (ZA diss., Nuremberg, 1974); and Wolfgang Buchta, "Die Urgichten im Urfehdebuch des Stadtgerichts Eichstätt. Zur Geschichte der Hexenverfolgung im südlichen Franken", *Jahrbuch für fränkische Landesforschung*, 58 (1998), pp. 219–50.

[7] Quotation from Wolfgang Behringer, *Witchcraft Persecutions in Bavaria: Popular Magic, Religious Zealotry and Reason of State in Early Modern Europe*, trans. J.C. Grayson and David Lederer (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 229 (the English translation of his *Hexenverfolgung in Bayern*).

[8] Behringer, *Witches and Witch-hunts*, p. 150.

[9] Robert Walinski-Kiehl, "The Devil's Children: Child Witch-Trials in Early Modern Germany", *Continuity and Change*, 11 (1996), pp. 171–90 (pp. 175–7), and Hartwig Weber, *Kinderhexenprozesse* (Frankfurt am Main: Insel-Verlag, 1991), pp. 261–7. See also Hans Sebald, *Witch-Children: From the Salem Witch-Hunts to Modern Courtrooms* (Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books, 1995), pp. 109–99, on the so-called 'Witch-Boy of Bamberg'.

children,[10] and the desperate and frequently reprinted letter written by Haan's colleague, Johannes Junius, to his daughter.[11] To these cases, one can add several other important sources: the influential "Bambergische Halsgerichtsordnung" of 1507;[12] Johann Gottfried von Aschhausen's prison in Würzburg and the infamous 'Druttenhaus' in Bamberg; the table of Würzburg witch-executions;[13] Friedrich Förner's sermons published in 1625;[14] and perhaps Friedrich Spee's *Cautio Criminalis* (Rinteln, 1631).[15] Some authorities, such as those in Mergentheim and Wertheim in Württemberg, also looked to these two witch-hunting centres, rather than, for example, the Bavarian university in Ingolstadt (located within the see of Eichstätt), for guidance in conducting their own trials.[16] The location of Würzburg and Bamberg along the main trading routes

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[10] Oestmann, *Hexenprozesse am Reichskammergericht*, pp. 499–502, and Gehm, *Die Hexenverfolgung im Hochstift Bamberg*, pp. 149–61.

[11] An English translation of Junius's letter can be found in Alan Charles Kors and Edward Peters (eds.), *Witchcraft in Europe 400–1700: A Documentary History* (rev. 2nd ed., Philadelphia, Penn.: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001), pp. 348–53.

[12] On the influence and continued use of the Bamberg code alongside that of its imperial successor, the *Constitutio criminalis Carolina* of 1532, see Soldan, *Geschichte der Hexenprozesse*, vol. 2, p. 397, and Oestmann, *Hexenprozesse am Reichskammergericht*, pp. 151–2. The similarity of the articles on the punishment of witchcraft in the two codes can be seen in Behringer (ed.), *Hexen und Hexenprozesse*, where they are reprinted in the same chapter, pp. 113 and 123–4.

[13] The table naming 160 convicted witches, including nineteen priests, has been reprinted in ibid., pp. 251–7. The data from it have been abstracted in Midelfort, *Witch Hunting in Southwestern Germany*, p. 182.

[14] For a brief summary of the contents and importance of Förner's *Panoplia armaturae Dei* (Ingolstadt, 1625), see Stuart Clark, *Thinking with Demons: The Idea of Witchcraft in Early Modern Europe* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), pp. 140, 453–4, 531–2, 575 and 578.

[15] Spee's frequently cited role as a confessor to the Bamberg and Würzburg witch-suspects originated in a letter written by Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz in 1697, translator's introduction to Friedrich Spee, *Cautio Criminalis oder Rechtliches Bedenken wegen der Hexenprozesse*, trans. and ed. Joachim-Friedrich Ritter (Munich: Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag, 1982), pp. xiv–xv. In German witchcraft historiography there has been a general acceptance of Ritter's assertion that Spee could not have been in Würzburg in the late 1620s (Spee, *Cautio Criminalis*, p. xvi); see, for example, Günter Jerouschek, "Friedrich Spee als Justizkritiker. Die *Cautio Criminalis* im Lichte des gemeinen Strafrechts der Frühen Neuzeit", in Gunther Franz (ed.), *Friedrich Spee zum 400. Geburtstag. Kolloquium der Friedrich-Spee-Gesellschaft Trier* (Paderborn: Bonifatius, 1995), pp. 115–36 (p. 122). As Theo G.M. van Oorschot observes, however, Spee did not have to be in Würzburg to have had first-hand experience of witch persecution, nor does it matter greatly that one cannot connect him with concrete examples of witch trials, "Ihrer Zeit voraus. Das Ende der Hexenverfolgung in der *Cautio Criminalis*", in Sönke Lorenz and Dieter R. Bauer (eds.), *Das Ende der Hexenverfolgung* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 1995), pp. 1–17 (pp. 5–6).

[16] Midelfort, *Witch Hunting in Southwestern Germany*, pp. 138–54.

criss-crossing central Europe and their contributions to that trade through the production of wine and textiles has also given the two territories a higher historical profile generally and generated a significant body of contextual studies.[17]

Studies of the Eichstätt witch persecutions have been hampered by the fragmented state of the witch-trial material, a comparative lack of drama, the narrow scope of any studies of the bishopric in the early modern period, and some errors and false impressions. Apart from Gregory of Valencia's opinion of 1590, the principality is known for the advice given by the executioner's assistant to the Nuremberg authorities in the same year,[18] a witch who was never convicted (Father Johann Reichard),[19] another who was not even brought before the Eichstätt authorities (Anna Käser),[20] and an anonymous third, the date of whose trial has been mistranscribed and frequently reprinted as 1637, six years after the end of the witch persecutions, instead of 1627.[21] The only substantial extant writing on witchcraft originating in Eichstätt

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[17] Lambert F. Peters, *Der Handel Nürnbergs am Anfang des Dreißigjährigen Krieges. Strukturkomponenten, Unternehmen und Unternehmer; eine qualitative Analyse* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 1994), for example, includes a detailed discussion of the Bamberg merchant Georg Ayrmann, pp. 213–75.

[18] An extract from this report is reprinted in Behringer (ed.), *Hexen und Hexenprozesse*, p. 211.

[19] Hirschmann, "Johann Reichard". The incomplete original interrogation transcript is StAN, Hexenakten 47 (J. Reichard).

[20] Käser's trial is described, with extracts from the documents, in both Soldan, *Geschichte der Hexenprozesse*, vol. 2, pp. 107–9, and Henry Charles Lea, *Materials Toward a History of Witchcraft*, vol. 3, ed. Arthur C. Howland (New York: T. Yoseloff, 1957), pp. 1130 and 1137–40. Käser had lived in Eichstätt and denunciations had accumulated against her in the interrogations of other witch-suspects there since 1620. As she was living in Neuburg an der Donau when the Eichstätt witch commissioners finally got around to her case in the spring of 1629, the information was passed to the authorities there. A copy of a letter from the Eichstätt councillors to the ducal council in Neuburg concerning this case is to be found in StAN, Hexenakten 49 (A. Käser—correspondence). Käser was executed in Neuburg on 20 September 1629.

[21] The first publication of this trial appeared in *Abdruck aktenmäßiger Hexenprozesse, welche in den Jahren 1590. 1626. 28. 30. und 1637. gerichtlich verhandelt worden. Was sich nemlich vom Tage der Einkerkerung bis zur Stunde der Verbrennung mit diesen wegen Hexerei- und Unholden-wesen angeklagt unglücklichen Schlachtopfern zugetragen* (Eichstätt: Brönner, 1811), unpaginated. The witch-suspect's name was replaced by the anonymous initials N.N. For an English translation of this adulterated text, see Rossell Hope Robbins (ed.), *The Encyclopedia of Witchcraft and Demonology* (London: Peter Nevill, 1959), pp. 148–56. As each trial produced an original confession, it has been possible to identify the source of the 1811 publication. The transcript matches, with the omission of the name, that of the interrogation of Maria Richter, StAN, Hexenakten 45 (M. Richter). Richter was tried and executed in 1627, not 1637.

was about a case of possession in 1582. It predated the first phase of persecution in the territory by eight years and ended with the exorcism of the evil spirit and the freedom of the alleged 'witch'.[22] The 'fact' that 274 witches were executed in Eichstätt in 1629 has become well-known only because of an error, based apparently on Kolb's report of his activities, in a minor article by H.C. Erik Midelfort.[23] None of the Eichstätt witch-suspects was held in a purpose-built gaol. They were remanded, like ordinary felons, in the existing town hall which could only take a handful of suspects at any one time.

Another reason why historians may have been put off studying the persecutions in Eichstätt is the complex geography of the prince-bishopric. Whilst the bishops of Würzburg and Bamberg administered fairly coherent territories, their Eichstätt counterparts ruled a fractured one. The nineteen administrative districts of the principality were dotted throughout the wider see of the same name, nominally under the spiritual control of the prince-bishop, and the population was distributed unevenly across these disjointed units (see Map 1). In 1590, sixteen other temporal authorities controlled over half of the total area of the episcopate. They included powerful men who had shaped the political geography of the Holy Roman Empire in the sixteenth century and who were to have a profound influence on the events of seventeenth-century Europe: the Electors Palatine, the counts of Pappenheim, the margraves of Ansbach, the councillors of Nuremberg, and the dukes of Bavaria. The communities in Eichstätt, isolated as they were from one another, were therefore vulnerable to Protestant propaganda and, in times of war, military attack. The government of the Eichstätt prince-bishops, particularly during the Thirty Years' War (1618–48) and the period immediately prior to 1618, was consequently circumscribed by the policies pursued by neighbouring territories and

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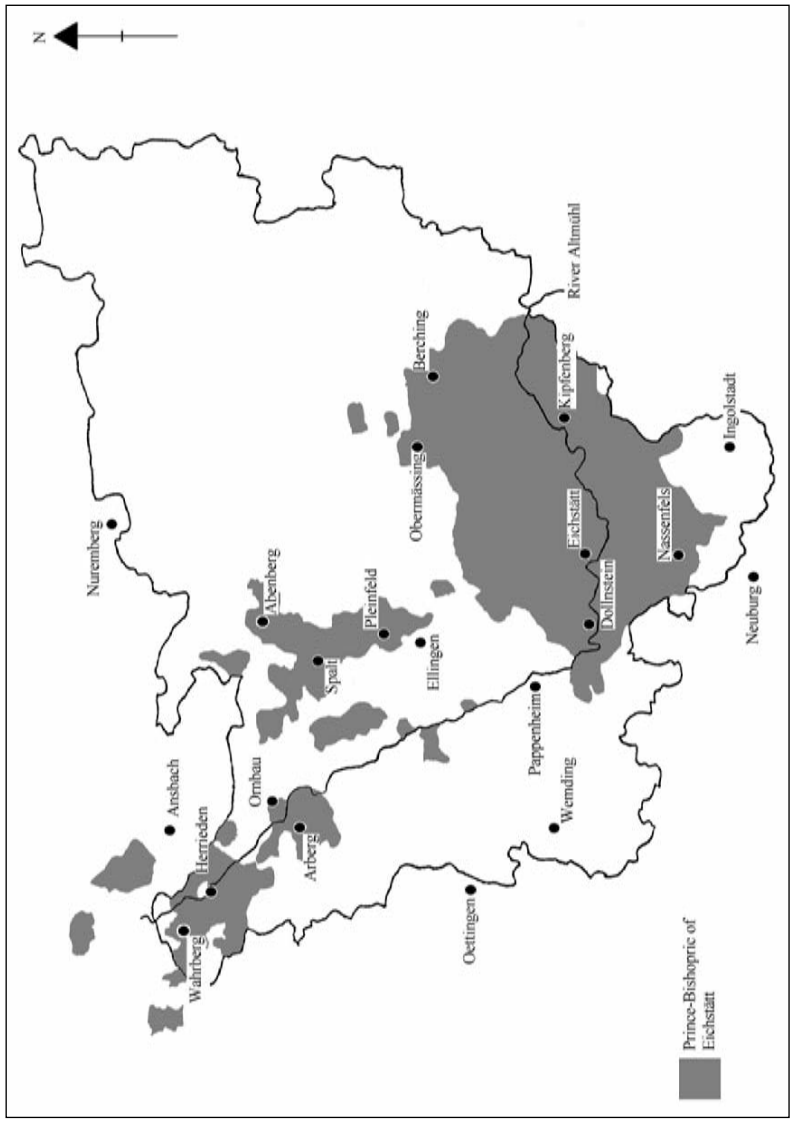
[22] Sixtum Agricolum and Georgium Witmerum, *Erschröckliche gantz warhafftige Geschicht / welche sich mit Apolonia / Hannsen Geißlbrechts Burgers zu Spalt inn dem Eÿstätter Bistumb / Haußfrawen / so den 20. Octobris / Anno 82. von dem bösen feind gar hart besessen / vnnd doch den 24. gedachts Monats widerumb durch GOTTES gnädige Hilff / auß solcher grossen Pein vnnd Marter entledige worden / verlauffen hat* (Ingolstadt, 1584).

[23] H.C. Erik Midelfort, "Heartland of the Witchcraze: Central and Northern Europe", *History Today* (February, 1981), pp. 27–31. Kolb's report is mentioned (without his name) in both Riezler, *Geschichte der Hexenprozesse in Bayern*, p. 226, and Lea, *Materials*, vol. 3, p. 1130, although neither author makes an assumption about the length of time referred to by the judge. Anne Llewellyn Barstow has repeated Midelfort's error, citing the *History Today* article, *Witchcraze: A New History of the European Witch Hunts* (London: Pandora, 1994), p. 59.



Map 1. The prince-bishopric of Eichstätt. This map shows the diocese of Eichstätt and the territories of the prince-bishopric, with some principal local towns.

by a need to maintain the protection offered by the devoutly Catholic Bavarian dukes.[24] The emphasis of Johann Conrad von Gemmingen's government from 1595 to 1612 had been on maintaining good relations with all neighbouring states regardless of their chosen confession to the extent of electing not to join the Catholic League when it was founded in 1609.[25] One of the first acts of Gemmingen's successor, Johann Christoph von Westerstetten, however, was to take the principality into the League.[26] This act was not merely a defensive one. Westerstetten seems to have regarded membership of the League as an essential component of his aggressive policy of recatholicization. The witch persecutions in Eichstätt were also fuelled by this reformist attitude, as well as Westerstetten's experiences of witch trials in Ellwangen and the fear of Protestant militancy (in the form of the Protestant Union) which he shared with other Catholic leaders in the region.

Given the relative lack of 'interesting' material and accessible historical background, and the complexities of political and judicial jurisdictions within the prince-bishopric, it is not surprising that the persecutions in Eichstätt have been relegated to footnotes and excursi in studies of the more prominent neighbouring territories. In itself this approach is important. The Catholic Franconian principalities and the duchy of Bavaria shared common religious and political agendas, and even a natural climate, from which the witch persecutions cannot be divorced.

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[24] The prince-bishops did, of course, engage with their other temporal neighbours. Much of the extant source material concerning the principality consists of frequent and routine discussions with the officials of other territories about, for example, the exact position of the borders of the state, Karl Röttel (ed.), *Das Hochstift Eichstätt. Grenzsteine, Karten, Geschichte* (Ingolstadt: Verlag Donau Courier, 1987).

[25] Gemmingen corresponded with Joachim Ernst, the Lutheran margrave of Ansbach, notably about their gardens. He also engaged Basilius Besler, a Nuremberg apothecary, to coordinate the production of the *Hortus Eystettensis* (Nuremberg, 1612), and sanctioned the employment of Nuremberg engravers and colourists in its publication. On the production of the *Hortus Eystettensis*, see Brun Appel, "Johann Conrad von Gemmingen: ein Bischof und sein Garten", in Hans-Otto Keunecke (ed.), *Hortus Eystettensis: zur Geschichte eines Gartens und einer Buches* (Munich: Schirmer/Mosel, 1989), pp. 31–68, and Nicolas Barker, *Hortus Eystettensis: The Bishop's Garden and Besler's Magnificent Book* (corrected ed., New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1995).

[26] Simon Adams, "The Union, the League and the politics of Europe", in Geoffrey Parker (ed.), *The Thirty Years' War* (2nd ed., London: Routledge, 1997), pp. 22–34 (p. 31). In contrast, Würzburg had been one of the original members of the League formed on 10 July 1610, and Bamberg had joined by the autumn of the same year, ibid., p. 28. In March 1614, Westerstetten, with the bishops of Würzburg and Bamberg and the prior of Ellwangen, signed a private treaty with Maximilian of Bavaria to protect the duke from Habsburg interference in the affairs of the League, ibid., p. 31.

Not only did the earlier Eichstätt trials of 1590 precede and provide examples for those elsewhere in the south-eastern states of the Holy Roman Empire, but the Franconian persecutions were rooted in the same set of causes. Several political, theological and perhaps climatic factors seem to have precipitated the outbursts of large-scale witch prosecution in Eichstätt and contributed to the excessive number of trials in the other two prince-bishoprics. There was also significant movement of witch-hunting personnel around southern Germany.

In return for the protection which some of their neighbours cultivated from them, the dukes of Bavaria used the Franconian bishoprics as a Catholic buffer region of client states separating the duchy from the eastern lands of the Calvinist Palatinate as well as the territories of the other local Protestants who were potential allies of the Elector. The dukes of Bavaria, Wilhelm V (r. 1579–97) and Maximilian I (r. 1597–1651; prince-elector from 1623), shared with several of the Franconian prince-bishops, especially those predisposed to witch-hunting, both a zealous approach to post-Tridentine reform as the main protection against the Protestant heresy and, from the early years of the seventeenth century, a fear of war with Protestant princes.[27] Wilhelm was a pious defender of the Catholic faith, and the reforming tendencies of his son Maximilian and the Eichstätt bishops Martin von Schaumberg (r. 1560–90) and Caspar von Seckendorf (r. 1590–5) are frequently emphasized by biographers and historians.[28] In the cases of Schaumberg and Seckendorf, however, this is a misleading characterization of their reigns. Schaumberg and the cathedral chapters of his immediate successors in Eichstätt were reluctant to impose Tridentine decrees and resisted the introduction of new religious orders, notably the Jesuits, into the see.[29] The ailing

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[27] On the reformist tendencies of the dukes and the bishops, see Behringer, *Hexenverfolgung in Bayern*, pp. 112–21. For a summary of the political manoeuvrings prior to the outbreak of the Thirty Years' War, see Adams, "The Union, the League and the politics of Europe".

[28] Maximilian's faith is the most prominent feature of his entry in, for example, *Bosl's bayerische Biographie*, ed. Karl Bosl (Regensburg: Pustet, 1983), p. 512. Behringer mentions Schaumberg and Seckendorf only once in *Hexenverfolgung in Bayern* referring to them both as 'reforming bishops', a term which serves as a shorthand indication of the main themes of their careers, p. 161.

[29] Schaumberg seems only to have gained a reputation as a reforming bishop because he founded the first post-Tridentine seminary in 1560, built between 1562 and 1570, *Bosl's bayerische Biographie*, p. 668. After establishing the seminary, Schaumberg's actions concerned less religious than administrative reform, Anton Hotter, *Eichstätt, Haupt- und Residenzstadt des ehemaligen Fürstenthums* (Eichstätt: Krüll, 1865), p. 72. Hotter is the only author to comment on Seckendorf's reforming tendencies, noting that the only indica-

Seckendorf was also in no condition to pursue a coherent policy of recatholicization on his own initiative, whilst his coadjutor from 1593, Johann Conrad von Gemmingen, was less interested in reform than in his garden and other 'humanist' activities.[30]

Later, during the Thirty Years' War, the strategic benefits of strong Bavarian support for the Catholic prince-bishops became evident. Surrounded by some of the main German supporters of the Catholic Reformation, the Protestant states in Franconia were isolated from their co-religionists in the rest of the Empire. They were also neither uniformly radical in religion nor constitutionally pro-Palatine or anti-Bavarian in outlook. Gottfried Heinrich, count of Pappenheim (r. 1594–1632) and marshal of the Imperial armies, for example, continued to support the principle of Empire throughout the difficult years of the early seventeenth century despite professing Lutheranism. As war in the Empire seemed increasingly likely, however, he converted to Catholicism in 1614, under the influence of his wife and the tutelage of the Eichstätt prince-bishop Johann Christoph von Westerstetten.[31] The duke of Neuburg, Philipp Ludwig, broke with the Protestant Union in 1613, disenchanted with the behaviour of its more powerful members, and actively sought alliances with Saxony and Bavaria.[32] In the same year his son, Wolfgang Wilhelm, secretly converted to Catholicism and married Duke Maximilian's sister, Anna Magdalena, a marriage blessed

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tion of this is the 1000 ducats he gave annually to poor churches, ibid., p. 72. Ernst Reiter agrees with Hotter's analysis of Schaumberg's episcopate, observing that the handful of visitations carried out during his reign and the extension of his jurisdiction over parts of the diocese were countered by a series of failures: to convoke a diocesan synod; to solemnly publicize the Tridentine decrees (although the marriage decrees and ordinances against the celebration of masks and carnival were promulgated in the 1580s); to take up the new creed and reform the beliefs of the population; and, despite the foundation of the seminary, to provide a sufficiently educated priesthood, *Martin von Schaumberg, Fürstbischof von Eichstätt (1560–1590), und die Trienter Reform* (Münster: Aschendorff, 1965), pp. 89, 92–3, 305 and 311.

[30] Bosl notes that Gemmingen continued to implement the provisions of the Council of Trent (*Bosl's bayerische Biographie*, p. 248), but this is not the impression conveyed in the most recent and extensive work on this prince-bishop, Appel, "Johann Conrad von Gemmingen", and Barker, *Hortus Eystettensis*. Neither did Gemmingen build the Jesuit church in Eichstätt as Bosl states. This was begun under the direction of Westerstetten in 1617 and consecrated on 30 August 1620, Thomas DaCosta Kaufmann, *Court, Cloister and City: The Art and Culture of Central Europe 1450–1800* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1995), p. 240.

[31] Julius Sax, *Die Bischöfe und Reichsfürsten von Eichstädt 745–1806*, vol. 2 (Landshut, 1885), p. 502.

[32] Adams, "The Union, the League and the politics of Europe", p. 29.

by Westerstetten; Wolfgang Wilhelm acceded to the duchy in 1614.[33] Uncertain or divided loyalties consequently prevented Protestant strategists from exploiting the geographical position of their potential Franconian allies, especially in the bishopric of Eichstätt. The political geography of the region therefore weighed in Bavaria's favour, at least in 1618. It was not until 1630, after Gustav II Adolf, king of Sweden, landed in Germany, that Bavaria was threatened with invasion. In the following year Westerstetten left Eichstätt for the Jesuit college in Ingolstadt, although it is unclear whether he was abandoning his principality for the protection of Duke Maximilian as his biographers claim.[34] When he departed from Eichstätt it was not directly threatened by Gustav Adolf's forces. He may therefore have had other reasons to visit Ingolstadt, perhaps in his capacity as its bishop or the president of the university there. Tilly's defeat in 1632, however, enabled the Swedes to create a new duchy from Eichstätt and the other Franconian territories and threaten Bavaria.[35] Westerstetten may well have been delayed in Ingolstadt and was perhaps prevented from returning to his residence by circumstance. He died in 1637 without seeing Eichstätt again.

It was against this shared fear of Protestant aggression that a demonological outlook distinctive to the Bavarian dukes, the Franconian prince-bishops and their allies elsewhere in the Holy Roman Empire emerged. The witch-hunts in the Empire formed part of the Catholic response to the increasing political influence of Lutheranism and Calvinism in Germany.[36] The Society of Jesus and the university in

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[33] Sax, *Die Bischöfe und Reichsfürsten von Eichstädt*, vol. 2, pp. 501–2.

[34] *Bosl's bayerische Biographie*, p. 840.

[35] On this phase of the war, see Parker, *The Thirty Years' War*, pp. 108–29, and Ronald G. Asch, *The Thirty Years War: The Holy Roman Empire and Europe, 1618–48* (London: Macmillan, 1997), pp. 101–9.

[36] Protestant authorities did persecute witches, sometimes on a large-scale, but certain Catholic judges, ecclesiastics and princes were responsible for the majority of witch trials throughout the Empire. The tables in Wolfgang Behringer, *Hexen. Glaube, Verfolgung, Vermarktung* (Munich: C.H. Beck, 1998) illustrate this point neatly. Table 2 'Die größten Hexenverfolgungen in Europa' (p. 61) lists the territories which experienced the highest number of executions. Among these, the Catholic territories suffered most by a ratio of about 3:1, and usually over a shorter period of time. Table 1 'Die größten Hexenverfolger in Deutschland' (p. 57) reinforces these observations. Nine men were responsible for the executions of about 6500 alleged witches between 1573 and 1637, the majority in the 1620s. Given that these men were all Catholic bishops, all supporters of the Jesuits, all members of the Catholic League, and all clients of Maximilian of Bavaria, one must assume that they were acting in concert, an impression reinforced by Behringer's analysis of the pro-persecution Catholic position after 1600, *Hexenverfolgung in Bayern*, pp. 229–41.

Ingolstadt in particular appear to have exerted the strongest influence on attitudes towards the so-called witch sect among contemporary German Catholic witch-hunters, and later also the ecclesiastical opponents of the persecution of witches in the Empire.[37] Jesuits like Peter Canisius, Jacob Gretser, Peter Binsfeld and Martín Del Río, as well as Gregory of Valencia and Förner, dominated demonological literature at the time of the witch persecutions in Germany.[38] Wilhelm V, a consistently staunch supporter of the persecution of witches in the south-eastern territories, promoted the Jesuits' role in the defence of Catholicism in Europe, and he had his sons educated by the Society's brothers at Ingolstadt. Both his heir, Maximilian, and younger son Ferdinand continued their father's policy against witches and other heretics. As archbishop of Cologne, Ferdinand authorized the burning of up to 2000 people on the charge of witchcraft in his ecclesiastical territory and the duchy of Westphalia.[39] Other witch-hunting bishops had also been educated by the Society of Jesus including two of the most notorious, Philipp Adolf von Ehrenberg, prince-bishop of Würzburg (r. 1623–31), and Westerstetten himself.[40]

Throughout his career in Eichstätt, where he was appointed a canon in 1589 at the age of twenty-four, Westerstetten sponsored the Society of Jesus's attempt to become established in the territory.[41] His failure to have the Jesuits take over St Willibald's College in the town may have contributed to his departure to become prince-provost of Ellwangen

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[37] On the formation of the Bavarian 'party' opposed to witch persecution, the debate about witchcraft in Bavaria and the role of Jesuits like Adam Tanner who lectured at Ingolstadt from 1603–27, see Behringer, *Hexenverfolgung in Bayern*, pp. 241–331. The influence of this party seems to have spilled over into neighbouring territories including Eichstätt where Kaspar Hell, son of a controversial anti-hunting professor at Ingolstadt, argued in the 1620s against further persecution and gained some influence in St. Willibald's College, ibid., p. 255, and Bernhard Duhr, *Geschichte der Jesuiten in den Ländern deutscher Zunge*, vol. II/2 (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 1913), p. 488. His influence was not sufficient, however, to bring about the end of the trials.

[38] For a summary of the connection between these Jesuits and the Bavarian persecutions, see Behringer, *Hexenverfolgung in Bayern*, pp. 26–7.

[39] Behringer, *Hexen. Glaube, Verfolgung, Vermarktung*, p. 57.

[40] Ehrenberg was educated at the Jesuit school in Würzburg before studying at several universities in Europe, *Bosl's bayerische Biographie*, p. 168. He had up to 900 people burned as witches, Behringer, *Hexen. Glaube, Verfolgung, Vermarktung*, p. 57. Westerstetten was educated at two important centres of Jesuit learning in Germany (Dillingen and Ingolstadt) and at Dôle, Hugo A. Braun, *Das Domkapitel zu Eichstätt. Von der Reformationszeit bis zur Säkularisation (1535–1806). Verfassung und Personalgeschichte* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 1991), pp. 567–8.

[41] Sax, *Die Bischöfe und Reichsfürsten von Eichstädt*, vol. 2, pp. 492–505.

(r. 1603–13).[42] He was, however, able to impose them on the ecclesiastical infrastructure of Eichstätt, apparently against the will of his subordinates, when he returned as bishop in 1613.[43] Westerstetten certainly gained the support of Jesuits who favoured witch-hunting. Förner, for example, dedicated his sermons to him.[44] Among his spiritual advisers in Eichstätt were several Jesuit brothers, among them Joachim Meggelin the cathedral preacher about whom Spee recounted the following anecdote in his *Cautio Criminalis*. Westerstetten asked Meggelin, who had been inciting the authorities to hunt out witches, how many denunciations for witchcraft he considered to be sufficient to secure a conviction; although Meggelin's reply was apparently small, he could still have been condemned by it.[45]

The spread of witch beliefs throughout Franconia and Bavaria may also have been aided by the movement of professional witch commissioners across the region. Dr Wolfgang Kolb left Eichstätt in 1628 to perform the same service for the count of Oettingen-Wallerstein and later in Ingolstadt and Wemding at the invitation of Maximilian I; his colleague Dr Schwarzkonz also transferred his services in 1628, in his case to the prince-bishop of Bamberg.[46] Hans Martin Staphylo von Nottenstein, another Eichstätt commissioner, was appointed to a position within the Bavarian ducal household at around this time.[47] The experiences of these individuals served as an alternative to manuals and reports as a means of spreading ideas and practices associated with the witch interrogations.

In addition to a shared political status and theological perspective, the

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[42] *Bosl's bayerische Biographie*, p. 840.

[43] Ibid., p. 840. He had earlier been able to do the same in Ellwangen in 1611 when he granted the Jesuits a permanent mission station there, Mährle, "'O wehe der armen seelen'", p. 372.

[44] Behringer, *Witches and Witch-hunts*, p. 112.

[45] Behringer, *Hexenverfolgung in Bayern*, p. 204, n. 284, and Duhr, *Geschichte der Jesuiten*, vol. II/2, p. 488. As Behringer notes, Spee withheld the names of the characters and the place in his work, but the story seems to have been known well enough for readers to make the associations with Westerstetten and his rule in Eichstätt. In fact, Meggelin's name does not appear at all in the lists of accomplices which can be compiled from the extant interrogation transcripts, even those in which over 250 accomplices were identified. It cannot be confirmed therefore that any of the witch-suspects did denounce the preacher of the cathedral.

[46] Behringer, *Hexenverfolgung in Bayern*, p. 239. Kolb appears as one of the two interrogators at the trial of Barbara Kurzhalsin in 1629 in Reichertshofen, Bavaria, Behringer (ed.), *Hexen und Hexenprozesse*, pp. 284–98 ("180. Protokoll des Vehörs der Barbara Kurzhalsin, Reichertshofen 1629").

[47] Behringer, *Hexenverfolgung in Bayern*, p. 317.

three Franconian prince-bishoprics would have all experienced the climatic variations which hit the region during the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, causing harvest failure, famine and a marked decrease in the population of between one and two thirds. These agrarian and demographic disasters must be understood against the background of the Catholic Reformation and the Thirty Years' War. The effects of an unusually adverse climate may have exaggerated the anxieties experienced by both the population and the authorities during this period, and I think that Behringer is correct to claim, on the basis of Christian Pfister's work, that such natural occurrences may have influenced the course of the witch persecutions in Germany.[48] As I will argue below, however, it is not possible to establish a direct link between the agrarian and related crises of this period and the Eichstätt persecutions.

Whilst the Eichstätt interrogations did form part of a series of witch persecutions related by the geography and political situation of the region, a prevailing theology shared by the local Catholic rulers and the movement of certain individuals between the various political administrations, there are also compelling reasons why the trials in the prince-bishopric should not be glossed over as a minor phenomenon of subordinate interest and importance to the larger-scale hunts in Franconia. They had their own history which has not been outlined in sufficient detail, and there is a very good set of source material which has not been examined thoroughly.

Witch-hunting in Eichstätt, 1590–1616

Witchcraft episodes in Eichstätt were sporadic before 1590. Over the preceding century, there had been just six executions for witchcraft

[48] Behringer, "Weather, Hunger and Fear", and id., "Climate Change and Witch-Hunting: the Impact of the Little Ice Age on Mentalities", in Christian Pfister, Rudolf Brázdil and Rüdiger Glaser (eds.), *Climatic Variability in Sixteenth-Century Europe and its Social Dimension* (Dordrecht and London: Kluwer, 1999), pp. 335–51, are general discussions of how Pfister's work can be applied to the study of the witch persecutions. For a discussion of how adverse weather and its consequences may have influenced the persecutions in Bavaria, Franconia and Swabia, see Behringer, *Hexenverfolgung in Bayern*, pp. 98–106. David Lederer has observed a connection between the worst years of crisis in the 'Little Ice Age' and episodes of suicide in Bavaria in "Aufruhr auf dem Friedhof: Pfarrer, Gemeinde und Selbstmord im frühneuzeitlichen Bayern", in Gabriela Signori (ed.), *Trauer, Verzweiflung und Anrechtung. Selbstmord und Selbstmordversuche in spätmittelalterlichen und frühneuzeitlichen Gesellschaften* (Tübingen: Ed. diskord, 1994), pp. 189–209.

and the exorcism of Apollonia Geißlbrecht (1582).[49] In 1590, however, the districts of Spalt and possibly Abenberg experienced an outbreak of witch-hunting which resulted in the executions of nineteen women in that year and perhaps a further seven over the next two years.[50] Unfortunately, only one interrogation summary survives from this outbreak. Barbara Weis's extant confession of 1590 is structured around nine articles which seem to correspond to a lost interrogatory drawn up for these cases.[51] The *relatio* drawn up at the end of the trial of Elisabeth Scheuch in 1603 and a copy of an interrogatory dated 10 March 1611 indicate that the interrogators of the Eichstätt witch-suspects up to this last date compiled questionnaires as necessary and on the basis of the known facts of each individual case.[52] The advice given by the Eichstätt executioner's assistant to the Nuremberg authorities in 1590 could only have been based on his experiences of the outbreak in that year, so we can be reasonably sure that torture was at least threatened and that it contributed to an escalation of this witchcraft episode. All that can be gained from the summary of Barbara Weis's confession, however, are a few biographical and case details and a fairly standard, if sketchy,

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[49] These executions occurred in 1494 (Behringer, *Hexenverfolgung in Bayern*, p. 50, n. 27), 1532 (BundesA ASt Frankfurt, FSg.2/1–F 13 669 Eichstätt L-Z, frame 61 (Pißwangerin) and frame (M. Schmid), 1535 (StAN, Hochstift Eichstätt Literalien 13, "Altes Halsgerichtsbuch", f. 125v (K. Werbell)), 1555 (ibid., f. 243v (Zimmermann)), and 1562 (ibid., ff. 127r–v (M. Hager)).

[50] StAN, Hexenakten 42 (B. Weis), f. 6, records that she was executed with eleven others who were probably, although not certainly, all women (only women are mentioned in Weis's testimony). Her mother had already been executed for witchcraft in March of the same year (f. 1). BundesA ASt Frankfurt, FSg.2/1–F 4, 68 Abenberg-Niederbayern, frames 2 (6 Unholden) and 3 (6 Hexen) both refer to six witches executed in Abenberg in 1590. As they give older secondary sources and no primary ones, and the data were collated in different years by the Nazi *Hexensonderkommando* (1938 and 1935 respectively), I have assumed that both records refer to the same event. Ibid., frame 4 (Dienstmagd) is a file for a maid who may have been executed in 1591, but reference is made only to a secondary source of 1931. Ibid., frame 5 (6 Hexen) refers only to a secondary source of 1905. It may be that this information is a repetition of the data for 1590 rather than 1592 (the date given by the compiler of this file). Articles discussing the history and usefulness of these witchcraft records can be found in Sönke Lorenz, Dieter R. Bauer, Wolfgang Behringer and Jürgen Michael Schmidt (eds.), *Himmlers Hexenkartothek. Das Interesse des Nationalsozialismus an der Hexenverfolgung* (2nd ed., Bielefeld: Verlag für Regionalgeschichte, 2000).

[51] StAN, Hexenakten 42 (B. Weis).

[52] StAN, Hexenakten 49 (E. Scheuch—*relatio*, draft and fair copies), and Hexenakten 48 (Interrogatory, 10 March 1611). Scheuch's testimony is summarized in the *relatio* under just six (rather than nine) numbered, but untitled, points concerning her seduction, the rejection of God and the saints, the diabolical gatherings, her malevolent witchcraft, weather-magic, and the exhumation of infants' corpses.

witch's story.[53] The most significant of these details is that she was denounced by her mother, Scheütt Anna, known as the Sekretärin, who had already been executed for witchcraft in March 1590.[54] She had not been denounced by someone who felt harmed by her. Weis and the eleven witches executed with her on 7 April came from Spalt, the same town in which four of the earlier witches had been executed and Geißlbrecht exorcized.[55]

In 1593, further witch episodes occurred in Eichstätt. They were not, however, related to the trials of 1590–2. One did involve the steward of Spalt, but the accusation of witchcraft he made against Anna Mayr seems to have been a slander in a wider dispute and was not taken seriously by the *Hofrat* in Eichstätt to which the conflict had been referred.[56] A second was a case of harmful magic brought by one couple against another who, they alleged, had employed a wisewoman, Magdalena Pößl, to help murder an infant in childbed and injure its mother. Unlike the cases of 1590–2, this one did not concern witch-heresy. Nor did it occur in either Spalt or Abenberg, the centres of the trials which preceded it, but in Berching. The defendants were admonished to live as 'good neighbours' with their accusers; and the wisewoman was reported to the authorities of Obermässing under whose jurisdiction she lived.[57] Nothing is known of Pößl's fate, but this conciliatory approach no doubt prevented a further escalation of witch-hunting. The authorities of the district of Herrieden, on the western edge of the principality, were informed by the *Obervogt* (senior representative) of the margravate of Ansbach that a witch-suspect under his jurisdiction had denounced five inhabitants of 'Amberg'. This was not the town of Amberg situated further to the north of the see of Eichstätt in the Upper Palatinate, but the town of Abenberg in the prince-bishopric.[58] From Herrieden, the *Obervogt's* information was sent to Abenberg. The local authorities

[53] Because Weis and her husband had 'an ill marriage', her mother had decided to introduce her to the Devil. He wore black clothing and a feather in his hat, he had goat's feet and was black. He fornicated with her, but was 'all cold' and so on, StAN, Hexenakten 42 (B. Weis), Article 1. After that the story becomes less clear. Apart from the inconclusive tales of weather-magic in response to articles 7 and 8, Weis claimed that she did not commit any acts of malevolent witchcraft because she had a 'lame' arm, ibid., Article 9.

[54] Ibid., f. 1r.

[55] These were the women executed in 1532, 1535 and 1562.

[56] StAN, Hochstift Eichstätt Literalien 298, ff. 3v–4r.

[57] Ibid., ff. 131r–v.

[58] Buchner, "Eichstätter Familienbuch", p. 433.

here then sought the advice of the *Hofrat* and were told to make sure that the suspect persisted in her denunciations. Nothing further came of this episode, even though Abenberg may have only recently experienced witch trials as an extension of the Spalt prosecutions. It seems therefore that the pattern of witch trials had returned to that which existed prior to 1590, that is, isolated trials which focused on known or reputed witches in which the authorities were reluctant to engage.

The persecutory trials resurfaced in 1603, but in the town of Eichstätt rather than in the outlying districts of the principality. In witchcraft historiography, the chronology of this second phase of witch persecution has not been presented accurately and is consistently reported to continue after 1603.[59] A careful reading of the "Urfehdebuch" which covers this period, in conjunction with the only extant trial documentation of the time, helps to clarify the dates of this series of persecutions. This register of all executions in the town seems to begin in 1603, the date inscribed on the inside front cover, and was kept up to date as necessary until 20 August 1627.[60] The scribes who wrote up the register did not, however, begin to date it consistently until 2 September 1606.[61] The trials which began in 1603 could not have lasted to this date. The only interrogation material surviving from this phase of persecution shows that Elisabeth Scheuch was executed on Friday 19 May 1603.[62] Scheuch's is the penultimate case of those witch trials registered in the "Urfehdebuch" for the period prior to September 1606. The entry for her case records that she was executed with the three women—Margaretha Beck, Ursula Schmelzer and Apollonia Oswald—whose *relationes* immediately precede hers.[63] If the register does only begin in 1603, the nineteen witches executed up to and including Scheuch must have received their punishment in the first four and a half months of that year.[64] The *relatio* for the twentieth of these witches, Magdalena Bruckmair, follows immediately the record of the sentence handed down to Scheuch and the three women executed

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[59] Buchta, "Die Urgichten im Urfehdebuch des Stadtgerichts Eichstätt", pp. 237–8, suggests that the trials of Scheuch and those executed with her occurred in 1605–6.

[60] The last entries given this date, DiöAE, "Urfehdebuch", ff. 241r and 241v.

[61] Ibid., ff. 59r–60r.

[62] StAN, Hexenakten 43 (E. Scheuch) and 49 (E. Scheuch—*relatio*, fair copy).

[63] DiöAE, "Urfehdebuch", ff. 26r–31v (for the *relationes*), and f. 32r (for the *Urteil* in which these women were named together).

[64] The case of Margaretha Heylingmayr is the first recorded in ibid., ff. 1r–2v, and the other nineteen witches executed with or after her follow immediately.

with her.[65] There then follow fifty-four folio sides of judgements and sentences before the execution dated 2 September 1606.[66] Given that the prosecution of serious crime was only sporadic in Eichstätt,[67] and that Scheuch was executed in the spring of 1603, it seems likely that Bruckmair was also executed in that year.

Apart from providing names and dates, the details recorded in the "Urfehdebuch" are limited. Sufficient information exists to gauge the age and marital status of these women and the status of their households. The summaries of their crimes also reveal that these women were not the victims of localized conflicts which found expression in witchcraft accusations. The six items on which Scheuch was convicted included just one act of malevolence against a neighbour, Anna, the wife of the oxherd Kraut Georg, who still lay crippled in her bed as Scheuch was being sentenced.[68] The remaining items covered diabolical seduction, the renunciation of God and the saints, the witches' dances on local hills and their gatherings in cellars, weather-magic that resulted in 'nothing but strong rain', and a vague description of the exhumation of an unnamed infant.[69] The structure of the report and the weight given to the diabolical rather than the harmful suggest that Scheuch had probably been named by some of the other witches convicted before her in 1603.

After Magdalena Bruckmair's execution, witchcraft episodes again became sporadic. One of these ended up at the Imperial Aulic Court in Speyer in 1604. Hans Bühler of Rittersbach brought a case of slander against his former neighbour in Abenberg, Hans Frech, in this court. He claimed that Frech had repeatedly accused his wife and his mother of being witches. Frech may have genuinely believed that this was the case and attempted to manipulate the trials in Abenberg, Spalt and latterly Eichstätt to articulate his fears. The lack of a direct accusation of harmful witchcraft, however, suggests that Frech himself did not think that Bühler's wife and mother had caused him any direct misfortune. The conflict between the two families escalated with Frech

[65] Ibid., ff. 32v–33r.
[66] Ibid., ff. 33r–59r.
[67] Between 2 September 1606 and 30 April 1608 (ibid., ff. 60v–62v), for example, only seven criminals were prosecuted at this level as felons, five belonging to the same gang of thieves. All were banished rather than executed.
[68] StAN, Hexenakten 49 (E. Scheuch), Item 4.
[69] Ibid., Items 1–3 and 5–6.

making a counter-accusation that Bühler had publicly called his wife a witch. The situation had not been resolved by 1613.[70]

The interrogatory of 10 March 1611 sought information about one 'Vnsÿnin Kirschnerin' ('mad furrier's wife') and her daughter Walburga.[71] The questions appear to be directed at witnesses rather than other witch-suspects. Nothing more is known about this pair. Agnes Hofmann whose case seems to have preoccupied the authorities in the district of Ornbau since January 1604 seems to have been dismissed in 1612 following advice issued in the name of Prince-bishop Gemmingen in 1610 that she should live honourably with her neighbours.[72] In drawing up his register of Eichstätt witches in 1840, Joseph Brems noted a witch execution in 1612. It has not been possible to verify the accuracy of this information.[73] Three women were, however, certainly executed as witches between September 1613 and August 1616.[74] Their cases do not seem to be related to those which began in 1617, although they would no doubt have been recalled by the witches' former neighbours when the first arrests were made in that year.

Witch-hunting in Eichstätt, 1617–1631

The primary focus of this book, the witch persecution which began in 1617, lasted until 1631 and saw the arrests of 182 of the 240 witch-suspects known to have come before the authorities in Eichstätt.[75] Of these 175 were executed, two died in custody, one died during torture, and Father Johann Reichard died whilst still under house arrest in 1644, thirteen years after the end of the persecutions. The fate of two women is unknown. The final interrogation documentation in the case of one of these women, Catharina Glaskopf, dated 6 July 1620, included her

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[70] Oestmann, *Hexenprozesse am Reichskammergericht*, pp. 562 and 565.

[71] StAN, Hexenakten 48 (Interrogatory, 10 March 1611).

[72] StAN, Hochstift Eichstätt Literalien 3070b, ff. 1r–11v. The advice was noted on f. 5.

[73] BundesA ASt Frankfurt, FSg.2/1–F 72 3480, Joseph Brems, "Auszüge aus Eichstätter Original Hexen-Protokollen" (Eichstätt, 1840), and FSg.2/1–F 13 668 Eichstätt A-K, frame 193 (L. Hörlein).

[74] Katharina Kolbenhofer was the fifth of ten felons executed sometime between 11 September 1613 and 12 April 1614, DiöAE, "Urfehdebuch", ff. 86v–101v (Kolbenhofer's case, ff. 95r–97r); Anna Demerl and Apollonia Hartlieb were the only recorded felons executed after 12 April 1614 and before 6 August 1616, ibid., ff. 102v–110r.

[75] A detailed list of the numbers of witches prosecuted by the Eichstätt authorities can be found in Durrant, "Witchcraft, Gender and Society", pp. 298–303.

statement that she wanted to return to her village of 'Ortelfingen beÿ Burkhhaimb' (possibly Ortlfing or Ortlfingen in Swabia).[76] The details were abstracted and may also have been considered on 23 July, but the decision of the witch commissioners is not known.[77] Even allowing for the probability that Glaskopf is a nickname rather than a surname, no further interrogation transcripts seem to exist for her case.[78] Catharina Weis was the only suspect, apart from Reichard, still in custody at the end of the persecution in June 1631; what the authorities did with her cannot be ascertained.[79] Only one suspect, Maria Magdalena Windteis, seems to have been released.[80] In effect, the execution rate (including the deaths during the judicial process) between 1617 and 1631 was over 98%.

Complete or significant documentation exists for about ninety of these trials. In part, the survival of this material was facilitated by the large number of prosecutions undertaken in these years. In part, however, it was influenced by the systematic approach to record-keeping introduced by the new witch commission sometime between 1613 (when Westerstetten returned to Eichstätt as prince-bishop) and 1617 (the year in which the first of the mass trials of his reign were prosecuted). This approach included the construction of a standard interrogatory, and the proper filing and cross-referencing of the documents relevant to each case.[81] Of the two extant copies of the interrogatory drawn up by the

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[76] StAN, Hexenakten 46 (C. Glaskopf), 6 July 1620.

[77] Ibid., 23 July 1620.

[78] There is no record of the surname Glaskopf in Buchner, "Eichstätter Familienbuch" which suggests it was a nickname. She may therefore have been interrogated further and executed under a different name, but there are no clues about this in the existing documentation.

[79] StAN, Hexenakten 46 (C. Weis), 2 June 1631.

[80] Windteis was arrested on 14/24 November 1617, StAN, Hexenakten 44 (M.M. Windteis), letter from Abraham Windteis to the Eichstätt councillors, 20/30 November 1617, f. 1r. She seems to have been released late in 1619. Another letter by Windteis states that his wife had been imprisoned for just less than two years and writes of this period in custody in the past tense, ibid., letter from Abraham Windteis to the steward of Herrieden, 3/13 November 1619. The *Hexensonderkommando* recorded Windteis's release as 31 October 1619 which would seem to be about right, but cannot be confirmed from other sources, BundesA ASt Frankfurt, FSg.2/1–F 20 1183 Herrieden, frame 4 (M.M. Windteis).

[81] This systematic approach is evident in the types of document to be found among the Hexenakten, including preliminary reports from authorities who sent witch-suspects to be tried in Eichstätt (for example, StAN, Hexenakten 48 (A. Widman—preliminary examination) and (K. Pronner—preliminary examination)), the three lists of denunciations made against Paul Gabler noted in the Introduction, and registers of executed witches, StAN, Hexenakten 49 (Register).

witch commissioners, one is in poor condition and falling apart, possibly with use; the other is in relatively good condition (with the exception of an inconvenient tear) and was perhaps a fair copy.[82] It is conventional in form, resembling in its emphases both the interests of the *Malleus Maleficarum* (c. 1486) and similar interrogatories used previously in Eichstätt and other parts of Franconia, Swabia and Bavaria.[83] There was nothing innovative about the questionnaire which concerned only acts which had previously been attributed by other Catholic authorities to heretics (including the witches), Jews and Moors.[84]

In addition to the interrogatory and the *inquisitiones* and *relationes* discussed in the introduction, the Eichstätt witch documents include abstracts of denunciations (on the basis of which arrests were made) and acts of harmful magic, depositions made by witnesses called to testify *after* each witch's confession of the harm she had caused against her neighbours, and copies of the final judgements. Not all of this documentation is available for each witch-suspect. Included among the witchcraft documents are some wills, a collection of invoices submitted by the executioner Mathes Hörman and the correspondence contesting the legality of Maria Magdalena Windteis's imprisonment.[85] There are also the documents relating to the investigation into the treatment of the witch-suspect Maria Mayr and others by the town's prison staff. Apart from the isolated case of Anna Widman of Berching and her maid Kunigunda Pronner in which an accusation of witchcraft was the basis for the their arrests, there are no other extant depositions containing original independent accusations made by a supposed victim of someone's harmful magic.[86] There are also no other references in the extant material to an existing reputation for witchcraft which provided the basis for an arrest. One cannot discount the possibility that the final phase of persecution began with such an accusation or rumour, but such an aggressive act would have been rare in Eichstätt.

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[82] StAN, Hexenakten 49 (Interrogatory, working copy) and (Interrogatory, fair copy).

[83] Kramer, *Malleus Maleficarum* (c. 1486), and, for example, the misnamed "Kelheimer Hexenhammer" reprinted in Behringer (ed.), *Hexen und Hexenprozesse*, pp. 279–83.

[84] Cf. Norman Cohn, *Europe's Inner Demons: An Enquiry Inspired by the Great Witch-Hunt* (London: Chatto Heinemann, 1975), pp. 1–98, Ginzburg, *Ecstasies*, pp. 1–86, and R. Po-chia Hsia, *The Myth of Ritual Murder: Jews and Magic in Reformation Germany* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988), pp. 1–13.

[85] The wills and bills are scattered throughout the Hexenakten. The correspondence is bundled together in StAN, Hexenakten 44 (M.M. Windteis).

[86] StAN, Hexenakten 48 (A. Widman of Berching) and (K. Pronner).

There is also no evidence that relatives of witches executed in Eichstätt and elsewhere before the outbreak of 1617 were any more likely to be denounced or arrested as witch-suspects in the prince-bishopric. No witches came from either Spalt or Abenberg, the centres of persecution in the early 1590s; almost all were resident in the administrative district of the town of Eichstätt. Three suspects had had relatives who had been executed for witchcraft outside the context of the witch persecution of 1617–31. Barbara Ruoser's mother Dorothea Luz had been executed in the outbreak of 1603. Ruoser did state that she thought she might have been called before the witch commissioners because there had been a 'general' suspicion that 'because the mother was a witch, the daughter also had to be one'.[87] She was mistaken; she had been arrested on the basis of denunciations made by at least three other suspects, the younger Anna Lehenbauer, Anna Bonschab and Catharina Ströbl, with whom she was confronted during the morning of 13 December 1617.[88] Anna Beck's mother had been executed in Ellingen, a seat of the Teutonic Order within the see of Eichstätt, when Anna had been eight or nine years old, more than thirty-five years before her own arrest.[89] Similarly, Paulus Danner's daughter had been executed in Ellwangen, but he did not state when.[90] It may well have been in the persecution begun by Westerstetten when he was prince-provost there and which lasted from 1611–18. In neither of these cases, however, was the execution of the relative the reason why the individual had come under suspicion. In both cases, an accumulation of denunciations by other suspects under interrogation had led to their arrests.[91] This was the case in all the trials of the final phase of persecution, with the exception of the two Berching women, for which trial material is extant.

This phase of persecution began in the villages in the administrative district governed from the town of Eichstätt. Of the first nineteen witch-suspects executed in the prince-bishopric from 1617, only three came from the capital.[92] Six of the others were resident in Pietenfeld

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[87] StAN, Hexenakten 48 (B. Ruoser), 12 December 1617 (p.m.).
[88] Ibid., 13 December 1617 (a.m.).
[89] StAN, Hexenakten 48 (A. Beck), 23 January 1618 (p.m.).
[90] StAN, Hexenakten 48 (P. Danner), 27 March 1618 (a.m.).
[91] Beck was confronted with three of her witch-accusers during her first full session of interrogation, StAN, Hexenakten 48 (A. Beck), 23 January 1618 (p.m.); Danner, the commissioners noted, had been denounced by eleven of the previously arrested witches, StAN, Hexenakten 48 (P. Danner), 27 March 1618 (a.m.).
[92] These three were Ottilia Mayr, Barbara Ruoser and Kunigunda Bonschab, DiöAE, "Urfehdebuch", ff. 128r, 130v–131r, 138r–v, 141r, 142v–143v and 145v–146r.

(where this phase of persecution seems to have begun), four in Landershofen and one in each of Sallach, Wasserzell, Pietenfeld an der Leithen, Schernfeld and Adelschlag (see Map 2 for the locations of these villages).[93] One other convicted witch, Barbara Herdl, cannot be placed.[94] All were interrogated in the town hall in Eichstätt. Very quickly, however, the persecution moved from these villages to the town itself. After the execution of Maria Schaller of Wasserzell on 30 June 1618, the villagers who fell under the jurisdiction of the Eichstätt district authority remained unmolested by the witch commission.[95] After Widman and Pronner had been executed two and a half months later on 15 September, only three later witch-suspects interrogated by the commission came from outside the jurisdiction of the Eichstätt district: Margretha Daschner, executed on 9 September 1623, lived in Plankstetten in the same district as Widman and Pronner (Berching);[96] and the other two (Magdalena Creisinger, executed with Daschner, and Apollonia Lederer, executed on 15 November 1625) were residents of the district of Beilngries.[97]

Despite the large numbers of men and women denounced as accomplices by the witch-suspects under interrogation from 1617, the rate of prosecution varied from year to year. Excluding 1631, the average number of new cases dealt with per year ought to have been almost thirteen. Table 2 shows that in 1620 the commissioners dealt with twice that number, yet in 1621 only five further cases arose. This fluctuation cannot be explained by the continuation of the 1620 trials into the following year. Extended prosecutions did occasionally hold up the persecution of the witch sect because the town hall could only hold a limited number of prisoners at any one time. In this instance, however, all of the 1620 trials had been completed by the beginning of 1621. Space for prisoners was not therefore a problem. As both teams of witch

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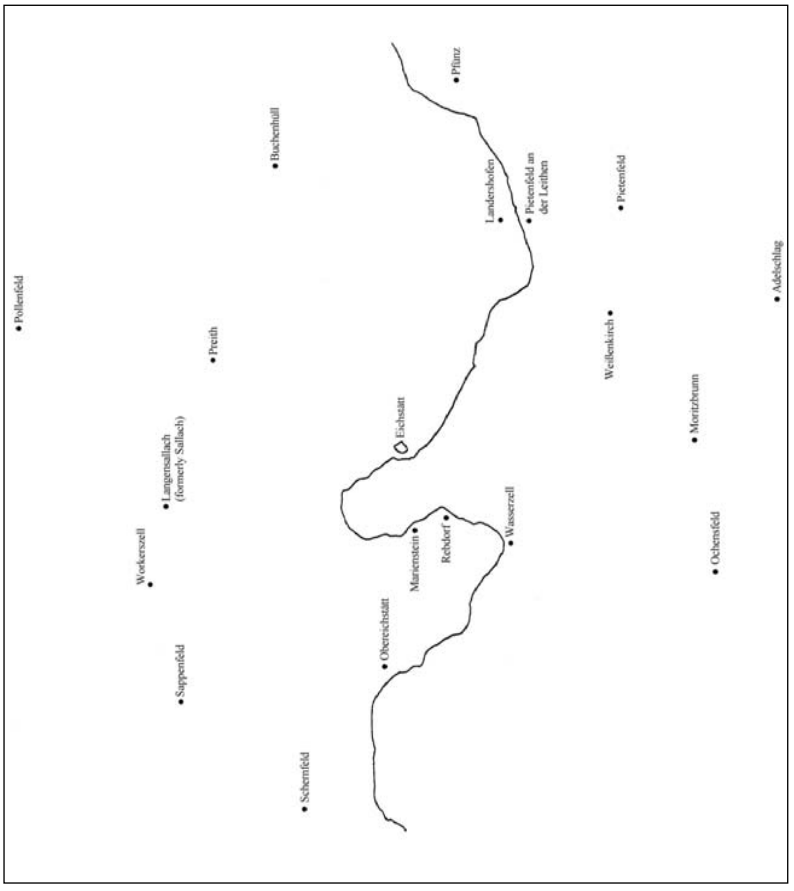
[93] The Pietenfeld witches were: Anna Schiller, Barbara Khager, Anna Bonschab, Wappel Weber, and Enders and Georg Gutmann, ibid., ff. 131r–135r, 136r–v, 140r–141r and 143v–146r. The Landershofen witches were: Anna Scheur, the two Anna Lehenbaurs and Anna Fackelmayr, ibid., ff. 126r–v, 128v–131r and 135r–136v. The witches from the other villages were: Anna Heimbscher (Sallach), Anna Schuester (Wasserzell), Anna Spät (Pietenfeld an der Leithen), Catharina Ströbl (Schernfeld) and Barbara Haubner (Adelschlag), ibid., ff. 125v, 127r–v, 130r–131r, 137r–138r, 141r–142v and 145v–146r.

[94] Ibid., ff. 139v and 141r.

[95] Schaller was executed with four witches from the town of Eichstätt, ibid., ff. 154v–164v.

[96] Ibid., ff. 210r–v.

[97] Ibid., ff. 209v–210r and 225v–226r respectively.



Map 2. The town of Eichstätt and the villages in its vicinity.

commissioners were active throughout 1621, lack of personnel does not seem to have been the reason for this variation either. The fluctuation remains a mystery, but it is clear that the experience of witch-hunting for both the population as a whole and the witch commissioners and their staff was not uniform. Towards the end of 1622, many inhabitants of the principality may well have thought that the persecution was coming to an end, but it was not yet half-way through.

Table 2. Rate of prosecutions in Eichstätt, 1617–31, based on confirmed cases.[98]

Year	Women	Men	Total cases
1617	12	–	12
1618	14	6	20
1619	9	–	9
1620	25	1	26
1621	5	–	5
1622	6	1	7
1623	14	–	14
1624	16	1	17
1625	7	1	8
1626	11	1	12
1627	17	6	23
1628	5	5	10
1629	8	4	12
1630	5	1	6
1631	1	–	1

Witch-hunting did not resume in Eichstätt at any point after June 1631, although Father Reichard remained a prisoner under house arrest and continued to maintain his innocence.[99] There were, however, three isolated trials for witchcraft in the following centuries: two executions occurred in 1723;[100] and one woman was acquitted of witchcraft in 1892.[101]

[98] Based on year of arrest, where known, or year of first documentation.

[99] The death is reported in Hirschmann, "Johann Reichard", pp. 676–81.

[100] BundesA ASt Frankfurt, FSg.2/1–F 13 668 Eichstätt A-K, frames 124 (B. Garckh) and 141 (B. Gorckh) which clearly refer to the same teenage boy, and 669 Eichstätt L.-Z, frames 112–13 (M.W. Rung). The source for these cases is correctly cited as Riezler, *Geschichte der Hexenprozesse in Bayern*, pp. 295–6.

[101] BundesA ASt Frankfurt, FSg.2/1–F 13 668 Eichstätt A-K, frame 185 (L. Herz).

The pattern of witch-hunting in Eichstätt

A brief summary of the witch-hunts in Eichstätt raises a number of questions. Why did the persecutions begin in 1590 when another model for dealing with witchcraft which did not lead to a persecution, the exorcism of the witch, had only recently been deployed successfully in Spalt? Why did the rate of persecution fluctuate dramatically over the forty years of witch-hunting in the principality? Why were there so few accusations of witchcraft 'from below' by the self-confessed victims of the witches or their representatives?

One of the more recent explanations for the emergence of witch-hunting from the late sixteenth century focuses on the 'Little Ice Age' and the crises related to it. Behringer suggests that these crises produced a climate of fear which facilitated witch panic across Europe. Unfortunately, it is not possible to make a direct link between the general phenomenon of the 'Little Ice Age' and the experience of witch-hunting in Eichstätt. There was no panic about malevolent witches among the population, at least in the period from 1617. Nor did the Eichstätt witches concern themselves with weather-magic which would have been a primary indicator of agrarian crisis. In 1590 Barbara Weis claimed not to know anything about weather-magic before confessing to helping make it once, the previous summer over the sheep field in Spalt. Whether any damage occurred she did not say.[102] Over thirty-five years later on 26 October 1626, to take another example, Ursula Funk confessed to three acts of 'weather-making', but she did not describe her actions or intentions and would only comment 'but whether she did damage, she did not know'; she did not elaborate on the bad effects of climate change (lack of the means of sustenance, hunger or epidemic diseases).[103] To put Funk's brief ambiguous statement about her weather-magic into context, on 19 and 22 October, she had given detailed accounts of three acts of malevolent witchcraft, including the results (three successful murders), which took up three folio sides

[102] StAN, Hexenakten 42 (B. Weis), Articles 7 and 8 'Vom wetter, Nebel, Reiffen vnd Milthair machen' ('Of the making of weather, fog, frost and mildew') to which the agreed confession was: 'About these two articles she knows nothing other than that the Devil, her paramour, carried out weather the previous summer as hit here in the sheep field'. She then went to a gathering at Massenbach where she knew only three others. 'When this weather had passed and come to an end', the Devil took her to a cowstall in Massenbach and fornicated with her.

[103] StAN, Hexenakten 48 (U. Funk), 26 October 1626.

in the interrogation transcript.[104] It is noteworthy too that the witch commissioners in Eichstätt did not pursue insubstantial testimony about weather-making, but they made a point of extracting as many cases of bodily harm from the defendant as they could. On 20 October, for example, Funk had been brought before her interrogators to continue her testimony about her maleficence, but 'since she denied knowing any more on this point, she was given further time to consider, led away, and taken to her cell'.[105] This was a common tactic of the Eichstätt interrogators faced with a reluctance to confess harmful acts of witchcraft, but they never used it to give a suspect more time to think about her weather-magic. This imbalance in the emphasis given to different parts of the testimony by the witch commissioners is also reflected in their attempts to flush out every witch-heretic by forcing an individual to continue naming accomplices for several days at a time—Funk denounced thirty-four accomplices between Monday 5 and Saturday 17 October 1626.[106]

Christian Pfister's work on demography suggests that one should not be surprised that agrarian crisis did not feature more prominently in the witches' confession narratives. He has observed, for example, that crisis did not become endemic in many areas, but rather lasted only for a few years at a time in any one region. Communities adapted well to the adverse circumstances of such prolonged agrarian disaster, postponing marriages and births to concentrate resources on survival and reduce the emotional stress of constant bereavement. The period of recovery, however modest, after agricultural and economic decline was marked by an increase in both marriages, including a greater proportion of widows and widowers than usual, and births. These were naturally happy and integrative events which went some way to ameliorating the disruption of the preceding years, and agrarian crisis may not therefore have had as much influence on the origin and extent of witch persecution as one might assume.[107] I do not, however, want to suggest

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[104] Ibid., 19 and 22 October 1626.

[105] Ibid., 20 October 1626.

[106] Ibid., 5–10 and 15–17 October 1626.

[107] Christian Pfister, "The Population of Late Medieval and Early Modern Germany", trans. Bob Scribner, in Scribner (ed.), *Germany: A New Social and Economic History*, vol. 1, pp. 33–62 (pp. 52–3). Although demographic studies of this period are not without their problems (see, for example, the criticisms of both Pfister and Günther Franz in John Thiebault, "The Demography of the Thirty Years War Re-revisited: Günther Franz and his Critics", *German History*, 15 (1997), pp. 1–21), a discussion of these lies

that Behringer's argument about the effect of climatic change does not apply to the Eichstätt situation, but only to observe that there is no compelling evidence in the trial transcripts that unseasonable weather and poor harvests exacerbated existing tensions and fears.

One might add that other possible indicators of social disruption are not evident in the Eichstätt material. If there was deep agrarian crisis, one would expect a corresponding increase in property crime, vagrancy or migration as individuals attempted to provide for themselves in drastic ways. None of these can be shown to have occurred in Eichstätt. Franz Xaver Buchner, for example, records 1229 individuals (703 men and 526 women) migrating to the town of Eichstätt 'on the grounds of marriage' between 1589 and 1618. The majority of these came from the see of Eichstätt (including other parts of the prince-bishopric) or other parts of Franconia, Swabia and Bavaria. Only sixty-five came from outside these regions, whilst the origins of another twelve are unknown. There is no evidence that their migrations and marriages were undertaken to avoid hardship elsewhere.[108] Even if there was sufficient and reliable source material on which to base a reasonable hypothesis that one or more of these indicators of agrarian crisis might have existed, there would still remain the problem of interpretation. The debate about the causes of an apparent increase in property crime in England in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, for example, has rumbled on for a couple of decades now despite the fact that some of the assize circuit and quarter session rolls, especially in Essex, give relatively good information.[109]

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outside the scope of this book. Pfister's work on climate change does not set out to demonstrate a correlation between years of crisis and social instability, but simply charts weather patterns, *Das Klima der Schweiz von 1525–1860 und seine Bedeutung in der Geschichte von Bevölkerung und Landswirtschaft*, vol. 1 *Klimageschichte der Schweiz 1525–1860* (2nd ed., Bern and Stuttgart: Haupt, 1985), and vol. 2 *Bevölkerung, Klima und Agrarmodernisierung 1525–1860* (2nd ed., Bern and Stuttgart: Haupt, 1985). Other recent work on adverse climate and its economic consequences also fails to relate these phenomena with social unrest. Erich Landsteiner, for example, is the only contributor to Pfister et al. (eds.), *Climatic Variability*, apart from Behringer, to argue that climatic change led to such unrest. He gives just one example, the riot by the migrant vine-dressers around Vienna in 1597 which was brutally suppressed, although the government then raised wages to avoid a repeat of the violence, "The Crisis of Wine Production in Late Sixteenth-Century Central Europe: Climatic Causes and Economic Consequences", in ibid., *Climatic Variability*, pp. 323–34 (example from p. 331).

[108] Buchner, "Eichstätter Familienbuch", pp. 427–44.

[109] Despite its age and bias, Peter Lawson, "Property Crime and Hard Times in England, 1559–1624", *Law and History Review*, 4 (1986), pp. 95–127, still gives a reasonable account of this debate, a debate which has not since been resolved.

The other possible indicator of social crisis would be that identified by Macfarlane and Thomas, a reluctance to fulfil traditional social obligations (usually towards the poor) as both benefactors and recipients of help became more individualistic in their outlook and, in the case of provision for the poor, turned to the state for relief from want.[110] The problem with this thesis is that it has, until recently, been measured in terms of the legislation to provide poor relief. The emergence of poor laws across Europe has been regarded as a sign that communal assistance was insufficient to support growing numbers of indigent persons. This analysis underplays two factors. The first is that legislators may not have been responding only to an apparent lack of traditional alms, but to less objective pressures to change the system: central control of the parishes and law and order; or reformist dogma which militated, at least in some Protestant territories, against the 'good works' characteristic of medieval Catholicism.[111] These pressures were not necessarily linked to long-term agrarian or social problems, although Behringer has argued that they, like witch persecution, are symptomatic of contemporary stresses and tensions.[112] The second factor underplayed by the Thomas-Macfarlane thesis is that even if there was a transition from communal charity to individualism and state aid, it did not happen entirely within the space of the few decades which saw witch-hunting. Recent studies of private charity show that communities continued to support the poor, at least those who were known to them, that charitable giving did not decline but changed, and that the poor developed subsistence strategies to help themselves without resorting to crime or vagrancy.[113] In Eichstätt at the

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[110] Macfarlane, *Witchcraft in Tudor and Stuart England*, pp. 192–8, and Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic*, pp. 672–4.

[111] For an overview of the historiography of poverty and social obligation, see Colin Jones, "Some Recent Trends in the History of Charity", in Martin Daunton, *Charity, Self-interest and Welfare in the English Past* (London: UCL Press, 1996), pp. 51–63.

[112] Behringer, *Hexenverfolgung in Bayern*, p. 119.

[113] Steve Hindle has shown that, despite the problems of harvest failure and inflation, the last general charity appeal issued by the Privy Council in England in 1596 was relatively successful, at least in Buckinghamshire for which the presentments from the churchwardens are in good order, "Death, Fasting and Alms: the Campaign for General Hospitality in Late Elizabethan England", *Past and Present*, 172 (2001), pp. 44–86. Hindle is, however, still cautious in his analysis of this event, suggesting that local interpretations of the appeal continued to exacerbate the tensions over alms-giving identified by Thomas and Macfarlane, ibid., pp. 81–2. For examples of continuing high levels of charitable relief elsewhere in Europe not necessarily enforced by either government exhortation or legislation, see the work of Sandra Cavallo, "Family Obligations and Inequalities in Access to Care (Northern Italy 17th–18th Centuries)", in Peregrine Horden and Richard Smith (eds.), *The Locus of Care: Family, Community, Institutions, and the*

time of witch persecution, for example, the mechanisms for the provision of welfare—the Spital (hospital), the Blatterhaus (pest-house), the Waisenhaus (orphanage) and the lay confraternities—either continued to flourish or increased in this period.[114] Although these institutions were sponsored by the government or the church, it would be misleading to suggest that they emerged because ordinary folk now regarded provision for the poor and sick as the responsibility of the state or the new reform-minded Catholic hierarchy. The principality of Eichstätt was a very small territory compared to many of its neighbours, and the councils and cathedral chapter tended to be dominated by families which had supplied councillors and canons to them for generations.[115] These male authorities were integrated members of the community and in that respect 'state' and church initiatives should be regarded as 'communal' initiatives too.

Even if charity were in decline, however, it is unlikely that it would have had a profound impact on the persecutions in Eichstätt. Most of the witch-suspects came from families which were highly integrated into the political and social fabric of the principality and its capital. They were simply not vulnerable to an accusation of witchcraft to avenge some petty social conflict which might once have been resolved by other less violent means, and very few of them found themselves in front of the witch commissioners for this reason. The conflict resolution models of accusations developed by Rainer Walz and others from the original Thomas-Macfarlane one were not therefore the driving force of the Eichstätt persecution of 1617–31. It is also difficult to identify any political, economic or religious confrontation between rival factions of the Eichstätt political or craft elites which might have lent itself to manipulation or resolution through accusations of witchcraft as it did in Rye, Salem

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Provision of Welfare Since Antiquity (London: Routledge, 1998), pp. 90–109, and ead., *Charity and Power in Early Modern Italy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

[114] Sax, *Die Bischöfe und Reichsfürsten von Eichstätt*, vol. 2, p. 503.

[115] The cathedral chapter in early modern Eichstätt was dominated by minor noble families like Leonrod, Stain, Schaumberg, Eyb, Seckendorf, Gemmingen and Westerstetten, Braun, *Das Domkapitel zu Eichstätt*, pp. 10–22 and 566–9. Several of these families (Schaumberg, Eyb and Seckendorf) also dominated other, sometimes illegal, spheres of Franconian life, including knightly feuds, Hillay Zmora, *State and Nobility in Early Modern Germany: The KnightlyFeud in Franconia, 1440–1567* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997). The councils in Eichstätt were dominated by the families Bonschab, Mayr, Mittner, Rabel and Rehel, among others. Like the minor noble families of the chapter, these politically dominant families were further integrated through marriage, Buchner, "Eichstätter Familienbuch", pp. 447–8.

and, to a lesser extent, Bamberg. The rarity of such accusations independent of the interrogation process and the fact that almost all the families of the local elite in the town of Eichstätt suffered because of the persecution seem to confirm that factionalism did not have a bearing on the course of this outbreak. One has to look elsewhere, to the figure of Johann Christoph von Westerstetten, for an explanation of the patterns of witch-hunting in the territory.

It is not possible to identify a culture of demonology among the clerical elite before Westerstetten's election to the Eichstätt cathedral chapter in 1589. The sole extant publication of the sixteenth century written in the prince-bishopric with a demonological perspective, the *Erschröckliche gantz warhafftige Geschicht*, does not give any indication of the horror which was to emerge shortly after it had been issued. The story of Apollonia Geißlbrecht's complicity in the Devil's pact in order to gain relief from the travails of this world, and her subsequent duty to the Devil to carry out acts of malevolence, are common themes of demonological and confessional tales.[116] In the early modern period, however, diabolical possession, when it appeared in cases of witchcraft, was more commonly associated not with witches (who generally acted with the aid of the Devil or demons), but with female victims of bewitchment. Kramer, for example, was concerned with how witchcraft could be used to facilitate the possession of innocent victims as an end in itself.[117] Cases of the alleged possession of witchcraft victims include Anne Gunter, Nicole Obry, and the adolescent accusers in the Salem trials.[118] Possession was not a feature of the Eichstätt witchcraft episodes from 1590. Geißlbrecht's restoration and absolution does not therefore conform to the normal resolution of witchcraft cases in Eichstätt or elsewhere, that is trial and, for many suspects, execution.

One only knows about Geißlbrecht's case because it served the hagiographical purposes of the authors of the *Erschröckliche gantz war-*

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[116] Kramer, *Malleus*, pp. 218–33 deals with the pact, pp. 254–69 and 292–323 concern the malevolence of the witch. Most other demonologies as well as the trial documents (including the Eichstätt ones, as I will discuss) and pamphlets recording episodes of witchcraft routinely include this transaction.

[117] Ibid., pp. 273–92.

[118] James Sharpe, *The Bewitching of Anne Gunter* (London: Profile Books, 1999), Denis Crouzet, "A Woman and the Devil: Possession and Exorcism in Sixteenth-Century France", in Michael Wolfe (ed.), *Changing Identities in Early Modern France* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1996), pp. 191–215, and Boyer and Nissenbaum, *Salem Possessed*.

hafftige Geschicht. There may have been other cases of possession and exorcism in the districts of the prince-bishopric, but, like this known case, they would not be found in the judicial records because they were not crimes to be tried before the courts. One point to note about this story, however, is that it is set in the town of Spalt in which four witches had previously been executed for the crime of witchcraft. The hero of the exorcism, Wolfgang Agricola, had been, at the time of the last of these trials in 1562, the parish priest of the church of St. Nikolaus in Spalt.[119] He was again present in 1590 when Barbara Weis, her mother and eleven others were executed as witches in the town. It is not possible to determine his role either in the prosecution of the 1562 or 1590 trials or in the writing and publication of the *Erschröckliche gantz warhafftige Geschicht*. Certainly he was active in the town when all of these events occurred and would, as dean of the Spalt chapter in 1590, have played a prominent role in local ecclesiastical and temporal affairs.[120] It seems, however, that Agricola and his colleagues in Spalt, perhaps directed by the chapter and *Hofrat* in Eichstätt and opinions from universities like Ingolstadt, were able to draw on more than one mode of dealing with witchcraft cases, and that their sporadic occurrences did not require the development of a coherent policy for dealing with them. In the theology subscribed to by the clergy in the principality prior to 1590, therefore, the demonological stress on the extermination of an active witch sect does not seem to have taken precedence over either the exorcism of demons from the victims of possession (even when those possessed were described as 'witches' and acted harmfully) or the Biblical injunction (Exodus 22, 18) not to suffer an individual witch to live which was adhered to in the cases prosecuted earlier in the century. There did not exist, even as late as 1584, the necessary demonological preconditions for a witch *persecution* in Eichstätt. That is not to say that the Eichstätt clergy of the sixteenth century were not interested in demonology. Both Kilian Leib, a prior of Rebdorf, and Leonhard Haller, once suffragan bishop of Eichstätt, owned copies of the *Malleus*, and Haller also possessed an early sixteenth-century edition of Johannes Nider's *Formicarius* (originally written in 1437).[121]

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[119] Monika Fink-Lang, *Untersuchungen zum Eichstätter Geistesleben im Zeitalter des Humanismus* (Regensburg: Pustet, 1985), p. 275.

[120] Ibid., p. 275. Agricola had been appointed to the deanery of Spalt in 1573.

[121] Behringer, *Hexenverfolgung in Bayern*, p. 50, n. 27.

The year 1590 would seem to have been the moment of transition to a dominant, but not exclusive, demonological view of witchcraft as a heresy in Eichstätt. There seems to be a striking correspondence between the timing of events in the political life of the prince-bishopric and the occurrence of witch persecution over the next forty years. There appears, in particular, to have been a relationship between the fluctuating fortunes of what seems to have been the pro-Bavarian, pro-Jesuit party within the cathedral chapter, which was the most powerful political and ecclesiastical institution in early modern Eichstätt, and the intensity of witch prosecution. Prince-bishop Schaumberg had ruled for thirty relatively quiet years in which he rarely attempted to impose Tridentine reform on his territory. His death in 1590, however, exposed friction within the cathedral chapter between the 'Jesuit' faction led perhaps by the young Canon Westerstetten, and an older generation which preferred the status quo. The situation was not helped by the difficulties in finding a suitable successor. Johann Otto von Gemmingen, the original choice of many in the chapter, had declined the offer to rule over the principality and went on to become the bishop of Augsburg. The compromise candidate, Seckendorf, was too ill to take on the full responsibilities of ruling both the temporal principality and the larger and more complex diocese of Eichstätt. A coadjutor bishop, Johann Conrad von Gemmingen, Johann Otto's brother and a nominee of those canons resistant to Jesuit activity, was therefore appointed in 1593 to take on daily administrative duties, but policy remained in the hands of Seckendorf and his advisors, among them Westerstetten who was from 16 February 1592 president of the *Hofrat*.[122] The first witch persecution in Eichstätt coincides with the brief unsettled reign of Seckendorf before the appointment of Gemmingen, that is 1590–2. It is difficult to ascertain Westerstetten's role, if indeed he had one, in the drive to begin persecuting witches in 1590. One can only point to his political presence and ascendancy at this time, his support for the Society of Jesus, whose brothers were, in the late sixteenth century, strident advocates of eradicating the witch sect from the neighbouring duchy of Bavaria, and the correspondence between the duration of Seckendorf's reign and that of the first outburst of witch trials in the prince-bishopric. Given the apparent lack of other prerequisite condi-

[122] Braun, *Das Domkapitel zu Eichstätt*, p. 568.

tions for witch panic among the populace, the election of Seckendorf looks like the precipitatory factor that led to a witch hunt in 1590.

It was not unusual for witch-hunting to begin at times of political uncertainty or instability. The English Witchcraft Statute of 1563 was enacted as part of an arsenal of measures to counter the potential Catholic threat to the vulnerable new queen;[123] and the North Berwick trials assumed a prominence in Scotland because they took place in the context of the earl of Bothwell's attempts to usurp the power of his cousin, James VI.[124] Half a century later, the Hopkins episode of 1645–7 occurred because the justice system had collapsed during the English Civil War.[125] Similarly, one of the factors which allowed the Salem crisis to get out of hand was the lack of an English governor.[126] In Spain, the 'Zugarramurri' trials in the Basque country were only prevented from escalating further because Alonso de Salazar y Frías, against the recommendations of his colleagues also brought in to examine the affair, was able to persuade Madrid that the Spanish Inquisition and not the local secular judiciary should be made responsible for prosecuting witchcraft.[127]

That the witch persecution of 1590 was perceived by contemporaries to be the active policy of at least a faction of the Eichstätt canons is confirmed by Gregory of Valencia's report of that year. His opinion called on Wilhelm V to initiate the toughest of witch persecutions in which the slightest suspicion should lead to an arrest and the usual rules for validating confessions forced by torture were to be disregarded. Gregory therefore advocated that the highest authority in the duchy, the court council, adopt an active policy of eradicating the secret witch sect. As well as citing the examples of Eichstätt and Augsburg, he gave as his

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[123] Barbara Rosen (ed.), *Witchcraft in England, 1558–1618* (new ed., Amherst, Mass.: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1991), p. 23.

[124] Lawrence Normand and Gareth Roberts, *Witchcraft in Early Modern Scotland: James VI's* Demonology *and the North Berwick Witches* (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 2000), pp. 29–52.

[125] Wallace Notestein, *A History of Witchcraft in England from 1558 to 1718* (Washington: American Historical Association, 1911), pp. 164–205, and Jim Sharpe, "The Devil in East Anglia: the Matthew Hopkins Trials Reconsidered", in Jonathan Barry, Marianne Hester and Gareth Roberts (eds.), *Witchcraft in Early Modern Europe: Studies in Culture and Belief* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 237–54.

[126] Boyer and Nissenbaum, *Salem Possessed*, pp. 6–7.

[127] Gustav Henningsen, *The Witches' Advocate: Basque Witchcraft and the Spanish Inquisition* (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 1980).

principal authorities the *Malleus Maleficarum* and Binsfeld's recent *Tractatus de Confessionibus Maleficorum et Sagarum* (Trier, 1589), both of which advocated the active persecution of the heretical witches.[128] Gregory was not writing in response to a general situation of panic in Bavaria in which secular authorities were judging a spiralling number of witchcraft cases brought before them on the basis of accusations of harmful magic from within the community. The context for his report was Wilhelm V's search for information about the witch sect and how to deal with it. This search was motivated by Wilhelm's desire to lead the recatholicization of the Holy Roman Empire and led to his general instruction about witch trials in 1590.[129] Despite this instruction and a steady stream of trials in Bavaria throughout the 1590s, however, the persecution of witches as an active policy of the ducal council, rather than its subordinate officers, only began in 1600 with its intervention in the trial of the impecunious travelling family Pämb.[130] Placed in this regional context, commentators like Gregory of Valencia seem to have regarded the Eichstätt trials of 1590 as being imposed 'from above' as an act of piety and reform.

Witch persecution died away in Eichstätt with the election of Gemmingen as coadjutor in 1593, only to resurface in 1603. Unlike Westerstetten, Gemmingen had not been trained at Jesuit centres of learning. He had been educated in Paris and Italy and preferred horticulture to theological discourse and church reform. This may account for his ambivalent attitude towards the alleged witch threat which worried the Bavarian dukes and the theologians and jurists at Ingolstadt as well as his canon Westerstetten. It seems unlikely that Gemmingen decided in 1603 to resume the persecution of the witch sect which had emerged briefly in 1590 as a matter of policy or in response to pressure from local 'victims' of witchcraft; he did not allow the isolated incidents of witchcraft accusation in the decade following his election as the coadjutor to escalate into a hunt. It may well have been Westerstetten's activities, therefore, which led to the 1603 outbreak. This second wave of persecution coincided with the re-emergence of the local controversy over the proposed entry of the Society of Jesus

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[128] Behringer, *Hexenverfolgung in Bayern*, p. 149.

[129] The instruction and various Bavarian documents about witchcraft in c. 1590 have been published in Behringer (ed.), *Hexen und Hexenprozesse*, pp. 210–29.

[130] The case of the Pämb family has been documented in Michael Kunze, *Highroad to the Stake: A Tale of Witchcraft*, trans. William E. Yuill (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1987).

into Eichstätt. Towards the end of Schaumberg's reign the cathedral chapter had voted, narrowly, to exclude the Society from the territory.[131] Although Seckendorf was physically weak and may have had the active support of the pro-Jesuit party within the chapter, this faction does not seem to have felt strong enough to use his reign to revoke the exclusion. Throughout the early part of Gemmingen's reign, however, Westerstetten led the bid to overturn this proscription on Jesuit missionary activity within the prince-bishopric and to give the Society control of the local seminary, St Willibald's College. Westerstetten's faction finally had to concede defeat on this issue in 1603, and by the end of that year Westerstetten had left the principality to become the prince-provost of Ellwangen.[132]

Without the requisite sources, it is difficult to tie the controversy over the introduction of the Jesuits into Eichstätt, the recurrence of witch persecution there in 1603 and contemporaneous events in Bavaria (especially the centralization of witchcraft policy) closer together, but the framework exists to at least make the hypothesis that it was activity among the supporters of the Jesuit cause which was in some way influential in provoking the resurgence of witch-hunting. The extant *relatio* for 1603 would seem to support the notion that the concern of the judges was to relieve Eichstätt of a heresy. As I have noted above, it shows that the interrogators concentrated on Elisabeth Scheuch's heretical activities—the seduction and pact, her renunciation of God and the saints, her flights to nocturnal gatherings and her relationship with her incubus—and that they accepted her limited answers to questions which would normally in the witch-trial context have led, under the threat of torture, to confessions of specific acts of malevolent witchcraft.[133] There is no suggestion either in the historical situation of the prince-bishopric or in Scheuch's confession that conditions obtained which could facilitate the fomentation of a witch panic among the population, and shortly after, if not before, Westerstetten's departure for Ellwangen this brief hunt after the adherents of organized witch beliefs ceased. Indeed, Behringer infers that intense witch persecutions should not have been a feature of the first six years of the seventeenth century in Franconia because they were ones of 'normal prices'.[134]

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[131] *Bosl's bayerische Biographie*, p. 840.
[132] Ibid., p. 840.
[133] StAN, Hexenakten 49 (E. Scheuch—*relatio*, fair copy), Article 4.
[134] Behringer, *Hexenverfolgung in Bayern*, p. 103.

On 4 December 1612 Westerstetten was unanimously elected by his former colleagues in Eichstätt to rule over the principality. During the negotiations which preceded the vote, the question of his close links with the powerful Society of Jesus was the only reservation expressed by some of the canons about his suitability. A compromise was found by inserting into the *Wahlkapitulation* agreement, which was revised by the cathedral chapter on the election of each new episcopal incumbent, the following clause: 'The bishop cannot admit a new order into the diocese without the consent of the cathedral chapter'.[135] This clause gave those canons resistant to Jesuit activity in the diocese the opportunity to counter any attempt by Westerstetten to introduce the order, at least without first consulting them. Soon after his investiture on 14 April 1613, the new bishop informed the cathedral chapter of his intention to call in the Jesuits and transfer the direction of the local seminary to them. The Jesuits did enter the principality, but the chapter rejected the central proposal about the seminary. A period of negotiation ensued involving the General of the Society who refused to accept a solution to the impasse in which the Jesuits' direction of the college would have been placed under the supervision of the bishop, as well as the rival factions of the chapter. Finally, on 30 August 1620, a Jesuit church in Eichstätt, the Heiliger Engel (now the Schutzenengel), was consecrated; and on 17 October 1626 the new Jesuit College was inaugurated.[136] If the institutional presence of the Society in Eichstätt was delayed, Westerstetten was able to use his position to further the spiritual aims of its missionary activity in Europe: the recatholicization of Protestant regions and the strengthening of belief in Catholic states. Westerstetten's catholicizing activities throughout both his principality and his diocese characterized his reign.

By 1630, Westerstetten had allegedly helped to bring some 22000 Protestants back under Catholic authority.[137] This figure may be exaggerated, but it does serve to highlight the predominant theme of his reign,

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[135] Quoted in Sax, *Bischöfe und Reichsfürsten von Eichstädt*, vol. 2, p. 493.

[136] Ibid., pp. 492–7. Popular resistance to Westerstetten's imposition of the Tridentine reforms in the outlying villages of the principality over which he had little direct control can be seen in the case of Bergrheinfeld whose inhabitants shared several overlords. The villagers, with the support of the local Lutheran nobility, seem simply to have refused to accept the imposition of Catholic priests and the Catholic reforms by the bishops of Würzburg and Eichstätt (to whom some of them were subject) throughout the early modern period, Ludwig Weiss, "Reformation und Gegenreformation in Bergrheinfeld", *Würzburger Diözesangeschichtsblätter*, 43 (1981), pp. 283–341.

[137] This estimate is based on Sax, *Bischöfe und Reichsfürsten von Eichstädt*, vol. 2, p. 503.

the consolidation and expansion of Catholicism within the see of Eichstätt. Apart from his involvement in the conversions of Pappenheim and Neuburg, Westerstetten accomplished this by using his princely power to force the imperial free cities of Weißenburg and Nuremberg to restore a number of imperial administrative districts to his control; he also persuaded several other individual churches and parishes to return to the Catholic confession.[138] Westerstetten's recatholicization programme was helped by the very close relations he had been able to establish with Maximilian I, the presence of Jesuit missionary stations on Bavarian territory within the diocese of Eichstätt, notably at Ingolstadt (established in 1555) and Wemding (established in 1602), and his presidency of the university in Ingolstadt from which much witch-hunting advice had come over the preceding twenty or more years. He was therefore able to marshal significant patronage and resources to further his reform agenda.

Within the principality, Jesuit missionary activity began soon after the new bishop's installation. In April 1615 the order introduced processions of penitence in the town of Eichstätt which were to be undertaken by new congregations and brotherhoods of Catholics. In July of the same year Peter Berthold, Westerstetten's Jesuit confessor, established the Marian Congregation and later an associated confederation for students; and Johann Christoph introduced the Corpus Christi Brotherhood into the town in May 1616. On the Friday after Ascension, 1619, an annual perambulation around the fields was inaugurated to bless them and protect the crops from hail damage. With the help of a direct admonition in 1622 from the pope and his legate Cardinal Eitel Friedrich von Hohenzollern to the cathedral chapter in Eichstätt, Westerstetten also forced acceptance of the Roman Rite on all the Catholic parts of his diocese. The effect of these introductions was to raise the profile of the church in Eichstätt, where there had only previously been one brotherhood, that of Sebastian, founded in 1494 and the clergy had withdrawn into the old rites. The introduction of Jesuit-sponsored reforms and institutions prompted the Dominicans to petition for the introduction of the Rosenkranz brotherhood which was granted in 1619. Catholicism was, therefore, literally taken out onto the streets in Eichstätt and it was done so against a backdrop of architectural renovation and new building also initiated by the new bishop.[139]

[138] Ibid., pp. 500–5.
[139] Ibid., pp. 492–514.

Westerstetten was, in fact, pursuing the same approach to recatholicization that he had developed in Ellwangen. It was in Ellwangen too that he began systematically persecuting witches. Towards the end of his reign as provost there, Westerstetten had supervised the initial and most intense phase of the witch persecution in the territory. In 1611 and 1612 about 260 witches were executed. In 1613, the year of Westerstetten's departure for Eichstätt, another fifty were sent to the stake. The persecution was to continue on a less intense scale until 1618 by which time about 390 people had been executed.[140] Interestingly, the persecutions in Ellwangen also coincided with the first Jesuits to arrive in the provostry.[141]

The witch persecutions in both Ellwangen and Eichstätt formed part of Westerstetten's programme of reform.[142] The hunts were designed to rid the territories of an insidious heresy which ranked alongside the Lutheranism that had infiltrated into other parts of the bishopric, into Neuburg, Pappenheim, Weißenburg and Nuremberg, for example, all territories which were restored either completely or partially through Westerstetten's intervention to the southern German Catholic hegemony. This new agenda permeates the witch-trial documentation from 1617 onwards. Occasionally a suspect was asked to recite the Paternoster and Ave Maria; Enders Gutmann's version of the Lord's Prayer, for example, is recorded in full.[143] This was an innovation in the interrogation process because neither Barbara Weis nor Elisabeth Scheuch seem to have been asked to perform this act. The recitation of common prayers mirrored the practice of the visitations which became a popular means of ensuring correct belief in post-Tridentine Catholic Europe. During these visitations, clergy and parishioners were also asked to recite these prayers. Similarly, the interrogatory used in the witch trials posed standard questions not only about witchcraft, but about fornication, superstition and the regularity of the suspect's marriage. Among the witch commissioners, therefore, it seems that Protestantism, witchcraft, sin, superstition and irregular lifestyles were regarded as overlapping

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[140] Midelfort, *Witch Hunting in Southwestern Germany*, pp. 98–115, for a description of the Ellwangen hunt and 212–14 for the chronological distribution of the witch trials there. Behringer has suggested that Midelfort's figures are perhaps too low (*Hexenverfolgung in Bayern*, p. 237). See also Mährle, "'O wehe der armen seelen'", pp. 325–500 *passim*.

[141] Midelfort, *Witch Hunting in Southwestern Germany*, p. 101.

[142] Mährle makes this observation of Westerstetten's witch-hunting activities in Ellwangen, "'O wehe der armen seelen'", p. 372.

[143] StAN, Hexenakten 48 (E. Gutmann), 14 December 1617 (a.m.).

and complementary threats which needed to be rooted out together. This new attitude towards heresy and sin seems to have impressed itself on the minds of the inhabitants of the principality. Faced with the instruments of torture and urged to confess the truth, Barbara Ruoser stated that she was a witch. She then went on to tell a story of diabolical seduction in which a tanner's apprentice tried to bribe her to marry him, 'but she did not want to become a Lutheran'.[144] In this part of her narrative, Ruoser conflated the heresies of witchcraft and Protestantism and suggested that she understood them both as diabolically-inspired. Of course, she soon confessed that she finally gave in to persuasion and became a witch.

Although they might have understood the connection between witchcraft and Protestantism made by the ecclesiastical authorities in Eichstätt, the citizenry also feared that the Church was manipulating the persecution to make money for itself. In December 1627, the citizens of the town confronted Westerstetten with complaints about the confiscation of property from the convicted witches. The bishop responded by abrogating his right to take the property of these criminals. He claimed that it was not his aim to enrich the state by this means; the purpose of the witch trials was solely to eradicate the witch sect.[145] As most of the witches came from the families of the secular political elite and men of local importance were becoming more likely to be arrested, the income from such confiscations may have been quite sizeable. The widow Margretha Hözler, for example, left a considerable fortune to over forty beneficiaries. She made provision for the payment of a debt of 1200 Reichstaler still owed on the sale of a house in Pfalergasse, and she bequeathed large sums of money (including two bequests of 100 florins and another of 100 Reichstaler) to thirteen religious and charitable institutions in and around Eichstätt for the benefit of her soul and those of her husband, son and parents.[146] In normal circumstances, the Church stood to benefit handsomely from Hözler's estate, but having presumably taken the rest of her property and that of many others by the end of 1627 when the persecution was coming to its end, Westerstetten's protestation that he did not want to enrich the territory through these confiscations may well have rung hollow among the complainants.

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[144] StAN, Hexenakten 48 (B. Ruoser), 13 December 1617 (a.m.).
[145] Sax, *Die Bischöfe und Reichsfürsten von Eichstädt*, vol. 2, p. 505.
[146] StAN, Hexenakten 45 (M. Hözler—will).

Despite the financial gain probably made by the church in Eichstätt, the hunt of 1617–31 should be regarded in the context of the institutional and ritual changes brought about in the region from 1613, of the keeping of the *Bücher-Verbotes 1629*, for example, which Westerstetten supervised 'because the break with the Catholic religion almost only arose through the false heretical books, tracts and writings'.[147] Certainly the prince-bishop's close associations with contemporary witch persecutors (the duke of Bavaria, the prince-bishops of Bamberg and Würzburg, the bishop of Augsburg, the provost of Ellwangen and the archbishops of Cologne and Mainz)[148] through the Catholic League and patronage of the Society of Jesus, and his previous experience of witch persecution in Ellwangen should make one beware ignoring Westerstetten's role in actively promoting a witch-hunt in his principality. His supporters certainly saw him in the role of witch-hunter. Förner was not the only author to dedicate his writings on witchcraft to Westerstetten. Jacob Gretser celebrated the bishop's witch-hunting activities in Ellwangen in a dedicatory paragraph to his *De festis christianonum* (1612).[149] The printer of the Dillingen editions of Franciscus Agricola's *Gründtlicher Bericht* (1613 and 1618) also decided that citing Eichstätt would help sales. He dedicated both editions to Westerstetten's suffragan bishop.[150]

The lack of references to agrarian crises or deep-rooted social conflicts in the Eichstätt material and the strong correlation between the career of Johann Christoph von Westerstetten and the chronological distribution of the hunts suggests that witch persecution in the principality was conducted 'from above' by the ruling ecclesiastical elites. These persecutions failed to turn into general panics about the presence of a witch-sect despite the preaching of Meggelin and the activities of the other Jesuits in the principality. One difficult question, however, remains in respect of the patterns of witch persecution in Eichstätt: why was there a geographical shift in persecution from the outlying districts of the principality to its political centre? It is probable that this shift was simply a coincidence. It might, however, also reflect the increasing influence of the pro-reform faction in the cathedral chapter in Eichstätt and

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[147] Quoted in Sax, *Bischöfe und Reichsfürsten von Eichstädt*, vol. 2, p. 508.

[148] Behringer, *Witches and Witch-hunts*, p. 109.

[149] The dedication to Gretser's *De festis christianonum* (Ingolstadt, 1612) is reprinted in Mährle, "'O wehe der armen seelen'", p. 431.

[150] Franciscus Agricola, *Gründtlicher Bericht ob Zauber- und Hexerey die argste vnd gravlichste sünd auff Erden sey* (1597; editions cited, Dillingen, 1613 and 1618).

the centralization of efforts to re-establish the hegemony of Catholicism throughout the diocese. Until the election of Westerstetten as bishop, the chapter had been largely reluctant to forgo the benefits of the stability which had characterized Schaumberg's long reign. Rather than accept change in the form of the Roman Rite and the proselytizing of the Jesuits, the canons preferred continuity. In a small urban centre like Eichstätt, witch persecution in the form it finally took in 1617 (as part of a religious reform package) must have been seen as disruptive and divisive. Whilst small-scale persecution might have been tolerable in the countryside where it could be regarded as a continuation of a pattern of sporadic, isolated witchcraft episodes, especially in Spalt, its presence in the town of Eichstätt endangered relations among the canons and between the ecclesiastical and secular authorities. That the cathedral chapter resisted the temptation to follow neighbouring territories by establishing a witch commission and formulating a standard interrogatory in the late sixteenth century indicates, I think, their unwillingness to engage in full-scale persecution at that time. It was only when the pro-Jesuit faction came to dominate the cathedral chapter that intensive reform measures, including the persecution of the witch-sect, could be imposed on the town of Eichstätt itself without creating division at the heart of the local ecclesiastical government.

CHAPTER TWO

THE WITCHES

As I argued in the Introduction, the high proportion of women arrested and executed for witchcraft in Eichstätt between 1617 and 1631 was not the result of local social or political conflicts or panics about witches. The explanation for the predominance of women among the witch-defendants lies instead in the persecutors' perceptions of what characteristics a witch-figure might possess, and the nature of the defendants' responses to questions posed at particular points in the interrogation process. These same responses also led to two unexpected patterns of prosecution: the high proportion of witch-suspects drawn from the political craft elites of the town of Eichstätt; and the significant number of men denounced as witch-accomplices, but never arrested. In this chapter, I want to show how and why these patterns emerged. In doing so, I will also show in detail how interrogations were conducted, something which most historians of witchcraft episodes fail to do.

The authorities and the gender of the witch

The views of Westerstetten, the witch commissioners and the canons on the typical witch have to be reconstructed from a limited range of sources. If these authorities articulated their opinions on the characteristics they expected to find in the majority of witch-suspects who came before them, none survive. Gregory of Valencia's opinion of 1590 provides the best general overview of the witch in the eyes of the Eichstätt authorities. The interrogatory drawn up by the witch commission and the commissioners' handling of the denunciations of witch-accomplices reveal which individuals they found most plausible as witches.

In the previous chapter, I argued that Wilhelm V of Bavaria, to whom Gregory addressed his report, his sons Maximilian and Ferdinand, Westerstetten and other Catholic rulers, such as Ehrenberg, were linked to each other and the university in Ingolstadt by their patronage of the Society of Jesus, their Jesuit education and their witch-hunting activities. Among these advocates of witch persecution, the *Malleus Maleficarum*

and Binsfeld's *Tractatus* assumed primary importance through the recommendation of Gregory and other jurists at the university. These demonologies were supplemented by later Jesuit texts such as Martín Del Río's *Disquisitionum magicarum* (1599–1600).[1]

Kramer argued in the *Malleus* that women were, by nature, more susceptible to attempts by the Devil to seduce them into the heresy of witchcraft. In his discussion of female witches, he drew on the authority of the Scriptures and the Apocrypha, citing such examples as Eve, Delilah and Jezebel, on patristic and classical authors, and on the stories of Cleopatra and Pelagia. Each citation served to impress upon the reader that women were weak, deceitful, unintelligent, jealous, vain and a general hindrance to man's communion with God and his intellectual endeavours.[2] As Stuart Clark has observed, he was not stating anything original in his discussion of this disposition in women; it reflected the misogyny inherent in late medieval and early modern orthodox Catholic theology.[3] Gender did, however, become *the* feature which distinguished the heresy of witchcraft from other heresies like Catharism or activities falsely attributed to other social groups such as lepers.[4] Although male defendants formed a significant proportion, and in some cases the majority, of the 'witches' tried in the Friuli, Estonia and Finland, the authorities in each instance still subscribed to the fundamental demonological equation of woman with witch. In each case, the persecutors were able to impose their own stereotypes of the female witch-figure on a culture which had continued to adhere to a pre-Christian association of 'low' magic with men.[5] It is not surprising therefore that in one of Binsfeld's few comments on the gender of the witches, he claims (in Clark's paraphrase) that women have 'a greater despondency in tribulation and a more angry desire for revenge' which

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[1] In his attack on the Ingolstadt opinion of principle of 1601 which found '*contra Binsfeldium*', the Bavarian Court Chancellor, Johann Sigismund Wagnereckh, quoted both Binsfeld and Del Río, Behringer, *Hexenverfolgung in Bayern*, pp. 270–1. Both Binsfeld and Del Río based their demonological tracts on the *Malleus*, ibid., p. 15.

[2] Kramer, *Malleus*, I,6, pp. 224–40.

[3] Clark, *Thinking with Demons*, pp. 112–33.

[4] On the beliefs and activities ascribed to lepers, Jews, Muslims, witches and other heretics, and how they were linked imaginatively by politicians and theologians, see Ginzburg, *Ecstasies*, Part One, pp. 33–86; cf. Cohn, *Europe's Inner Demons*.

[5] See the following articles in Ankarloo and Henningsen, *Early Modern European Witchcraft*: Ginzburg, "Deciphering the Sabbath" (pp. 121–37), Maia Madar, "Estonia I: Werewolves and Poisoners" (pp. 257–72), and Heikkinen and Kervinen, "Finland: The Male Domination".

makes them weak before the Devil's persuasions.[6] Against this background of demonological orthodoxy, women were always going to be among the first suspects to be identified by the authorities in Eichstätt once they had concluded that they had a problem with the insidious witch sect in the prince-bishopric.

The questions which constitute the Eichstätt interrogatory used from 1617 reflect the gender and spiritual emphases of standard demonological texts, rather than the putative superstitions or vengeful preoccupations of the local population. Of the eighty-four questions drawn up to aid the witch commissioners appointed by Westerstetten, only eleven dealt directly with the witch's harmful relations with her neighbours, and these were positioned towards the end of the interrogatory. Of these few questions, question 63 asked whether the suspect had seduced anyone into the vice of witchcraft, and if so whom, and questions 69 and 74 concerned the witches' entries into other people's dwellings.[7] Aggrieved neighbours rarely concerned themselves with these particular offences. They worried instead about the harm asked about in the remaining eight questions about the witch's criminal activities and which was a feature of isolated witchcraft episodes across Europe: injury to particular individuals, their livestock or their crops, the death of kin or, less often, marital discord.[8] Fifty-one questions of this document, however, were designed to elucidate the defendant's spiritual state and provide information on the nocturnal gatherings of the witch sect and the accomplices who attended them with her. As I will argue below, the twenty-two questions about the witch's personal history also concern to a large degree her moral probity. The emphasis of the interrogation was therefore placed primarily on establishing that the defendant was spiritually corrupted, that she had transferred her allegiance from God to the Devil, ignored or abused the sacraments of the Church and taken part in other heretical activities. The interrogators were then concerned to identify the other adherents of the witch sect among the local population. The questions about the witch-suspect's crimes in the world were subordinated, both in quantity and in their position in the interrogatory, to those about her spiritual offences and her accomplices.

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[6] Clark, *Thinking with Demons*, p. 116.

[7] StAN, Hexenakten 49 (Interrogatory, fair copy), Questions 63, 69 and 74. See also Appendix 1 "The Interrogatory of 1617".

[8] StAN, Hexenakten 49 (Interrogatory, fair copy), Questions 64–5, 67–8, 70, 72–3 and 76.

If one compares the content of the Eichstätt interrogatory with that of similar lists of questions and other pieces of legislation and demonological tracts, the emphasis on the heresy of witchcraft and the spiritual crimes of which it was constituted can be discerned more clearly. In the Kelheim interrogatory of 1590, the sequence of the questions about the defendant's criminal acts shows a different set of priorities. The seduction of the witch by the Devil was naturally the point of initial concern because the interrogators in Kelheim, like their counterparts in Eichstätt, had first to establish that the suspect had contracted to join the witch sect. Once her status as a heretic had been confirmed by her own testimony, however, the Kelheim prosecutors turned immediately to the defendant's acts of malevolence against her neighbours. Only then did they attempt to ascertain the quality of her spiritual state and force her to confess to performing sacrilegious acts and attending the nocturnal sabbaths. The remaining questions of this interrogatory addressed alternately other temporal and spiritual crimes: entry into cellars, bedchambers and stalls, the exhumation of children's corpses, creating bad weather, adoration of and sex with the Devil, the incurable illnesses the suspect had caused, and creating discord between spouses.[9] Throughout the list of questions much more emphasis is placed on actions which had tangible, harmful effects on human beings, their property and their communal lives. Over one-quarter of the questions posed in the Kelheim questionnaire dealt with such aggression within the community, compared with about one-tenth of those in the Eichstätt interrogatory.

The prominence accorded to the witch's malevolence in the Kelheim document reflects the sole piece of substantial anti-magic legislation then current in Bavaria, under whose jurisdiction the town of Kelheim fell, Article 109 of the *Constitutio criminalis Carolina* of 1532.[10] The authors of the *Carolina* prescribed punishment only for those who practised *harmful* sorcery. Although there is a greater awareness of the spiritual context and organized nature of the crime of witchcraft in the Kelheim interrogatory than the authors of the *Carolina* and its predecessors had recognized, these elements had not yet come to supersede the malign

[9] Behringer (ed.), *Hexen und Hexenprozesse*, pp. 279–83.

[10] On the development of witchcraft legislation in Bavaria, see Behringer, *Hexenverfolgung in Bayern*, pp. 122–223.

potential of sorcery as witchcraft's central feature in legal and political discourse in the duchy of Bavaria.[11]

As Ruth Gänstaller has demonstrated, the Eichstätt witch commissioners were not scrupulous in the application of this article of the *Carolina*, even though they used this legislation as the legal framework on which to construct their own juridical practices.[12] This was because they treated witchcraft not as a felony but as a heresy. The Eichstätt interrogatory therefore mirrors more the emphasis of the *Malleus* in which witchcraft was discussed primarily within its demonological context. Kramer did consider, in detail, particular malevolent acts—those which hindered generation, facilitated possession, caused infirmities, illness or death, injured cattle, and raised unseasonable weather[13]—and set out the Church's prescribed remedies against them.[14] Of these acts, impediments to procreation and cases of possession seem to have been raised much less frequently by witch-accusers and witch-suspects than the other acts which involved harm towards a person or his property. Even if one includes these types of witchcraft, malevolence accounts for only about a third of the text relating to the works attributed to witches by Kramer, that is part two of the *Malleus*; in the remainder of

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[11] Maximilian I of Bavaria was not to introduce his own legislation against witches until 1612. The Bavarian *Hexenmandat* covered a range of supernatural beliefs from general superstitions and magic (both 'black' and 'white') to soothsaying, astrology and alchemy. Malevolent magic was not discussed with any more repugnance than the more ambiguous and beneficent preternatural practices. They were portrayed together in this document as the arsenal which was deployed by the Devil in his battle with God for the souls of people and rule over the world, "Das bayerische Hexenmandat von 1611 [sic]", in Bernd Roeck (ed.), *Deutsche Geschichte in Quellen und Darstellung*, vol. 4 *Gegenreformation und Dreißigjähriger Krieg 1555–1648* (Stuttgart: Philipp Reclam jun., 1996), pp. 160–8.

[12] Gänstaller, "Zur Geschichte des Hexenwahns", pp. 46–65. The interrogatory cites the *Carolina* specifically, StAN, Hexenakten 49 (Interrogatory, fair copy), f. 11v. Abraham Windteis's correspondence about his wife's prolonged imprisonment makes reference to the *Carolina* as if it were the only valid law pertaining to witchcraft in the principality, StAN, Hexenakten 44 (M.M. Windteis), letters of 1 December 1617, f. 1r, and 9 July/29 June 1619, f. 1r. He also made reference to the tenth-century "Canon episcopi" concerning the illusory nature of witchcraft, ibid., letter of 1 December 1617, f. 3r. He presumably had access to an adviser who had knowledge of demonology and knew how to construct a valid defence against a charge of witchcraft in the same language spoken by the witch commissioners. How widespread this knowledge was and whether anybody else felt sufficiently confident to expose their doubts about the testimonies of the accused in this fashion are, however, difficult questions to answer.

[13] Kramer, *Malleus*, II/1,6–7 and 9–15, pp. 417–28 and 433–96 respectively.

[14] Ibid., II/2, pp. 510–28.

this section he discussed the seduction of the innocent, the pact, modes of travel to the nocturnal gatherings, copulation between witches and their incubi, and the performance of spells using the sacraments of the church—all before he turned his attention to the witches' malevolence in the world[15]—as well as shape-shifting and, at the end of this part of his discourse, male witches.[16] The main focus of the rest and most substantial proportion of the *Malleus* was the theological possibility of witchcraft and the limits within which the Devil and his followers were permitted to work by God,[17] and the legal basis and judicial procedures for instituting and carrying out prosecutions against adherents of the witch sect.[18] Kramer's preoccupation with the witches' spiritual crimes and activities generally and the precedence over temporal crimes ascribed to them in the second part of the *Malleus* were reflected in the hierarchy of concerns presented by the Eichstätt authorities in the principality's interrogatory.

Among the Eichstätt witch commissioners therefore the stereotypical witch was not the malevolent old crone, the victim of her neighbours' guilty consciences, whose image has pervaded much of the literature on witchcraft from early modern texts, such as the Kelheim interrogatory or the sceptic Reginald Scot's *The Discoverie of Witchcraft* (1584), to the beginnings of modern witchcraft historiography;[19] nor did she embody the more subtle, local conflicts which have been cited as the prevailing contexts within which witchcraft accusations and trials took place. The typical witch was rather the heretic against whom Kramer's inquisitorial powers and the *Malleus* had been directed. Her primary crime was the renunciation of God as her master; her malevolent acts were of secondary importance, expressing her devotion to her new spiritual lord, the Devil, rather than being motivated by real social conflicts. The only characteristic common to all early modern stereotypes of the witch was that she was usually, but not always, female. The

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[15] Ibid., II/1,1–5, pp. 363–416.
[16] Ibid., II/1,8 and 16, pp. 428–33 and 496–510 respectively.
[17] Ibid., I, pp. 136–343.
[18] Ibid., III, pp. 599–796.
[19] Scot wrote, for example: 'One sort of such are said to bee witches, are women which be commonly old, lame, bleare-eied, pale, fowle, and full of wrinkles. . . . They are leane and deformed, shewing melancholie in their faces, to the horror of all that see them.', Reginald Scot, *The Discoverie of Witchcraft* (1584; repr. Mineola, NY: Dover, 1972), p. 4.

particular configuration of stereotypical elements found in the Eichstätt interrogatory, however, also had a profound effect on the information which the interrogators were able to elicit from the witch-defendants who stood before them.

The interrogatory and the course of the witch interrogations

The extant trial transcripts from 1617 onwards show that the witch commissioners followed the priorities of the interrogatory as strictly as they could. The trial of Margretha Bittelmayr, for example, progressed through the following stages. She was arrested on the morning of 15 October 1626 and brought immediately before the witch commissioners. Few of the questions put to her were recorded in the trial transcript, but her answers show that the commissioners were using the standard questionnaire as a guide to their interrogation of her. The exact sequence of the questions was, however, contingent upon the course of the interrogation, in particular the defendant's willingness to co-operate with her judges. Torture was frequently applied to obdurate witch-suspects in Eichstätt, and the more recalcitrant of them often retracted their testimonies which then had to be re-established by the witch commissioners. The transcript of each trial was therefore punctuated by episodes of recapitulation and the introduction of new or variant evidence which disrupted the flow of the interrogation.

The deposition recording the interrogation of Bittelmayr begins with a summary of personal details about herself, her parents, her marital status and her children which were derived from her answers to the first twenty-two questions prescribed in the interrogatory. The details recorded at this point in the interrogation transcript were not as innocuous as they might first appear. The commissioners were not merely seeking biographical information. What they were also looking for was evidence that Bittelmayr's character did not conform to the patriarchal or spiritual norms of early modern Catholic society. Questions about her marital status, for example, focused on the validity of her marriage and her chastity prior to it. In question 9, Bittelmayr was asked 'If she married of her own will or with the foreknowledge of her parents and friends';[20] and in answer to question 12 they hoped to find out 'Whether

[20] StAN, Hexenakten 49 (Interrogatory, fair copy), Question 9.

she had not previously, when single, had disorderly love with him [her husband], mixed with him in the flesh, or done such things willingly.'[21] Two questions later a defendant was to be asked directly about her attitude towards superstition: 'If she had not before or near to her wedding used superstitious things, or let them be used by others.'[22] In her answers to this initial phase of questioning, Bittelmayr appeared to have been chaste and properly married, and there is an absence of any reference to superstitious practices. That the commissioners had been concerned with her lifestyle is, however, confirmed by the introductory paragraph of the afternoon session of the first day of interrogation. The record of each session before the witch commission was often preceded by a summary of the topics which were to be covered during that period of questioning. On the afternoon of 15 October 1626, Bittelmayr was asked '. . . how she lives, also what she thinks, and when she came to that vice, as well as how and in what form'.[23] Under these separate heads were grouped together the questions of different sections of the interrogatory. The twenty-two personal questions with which the prosecutors began their interrogations were therefore summarized as 'how she lives', a broad category which could include a spiritual appraisal of her conduct as well as the more conventional biographical requisites of the trial situation.

In this context, these questions about how Bittelmayr lived may not evince only a concern to elicit useful prosecution evidence. They were also an integral element of more than one tool adopted by Westerstetten's government in the aggressive reform of his subjects. The questions reflect the concerns of Tridentine Catholicism and resemble those asked in the visitations which were designed to be a primary means by which moral and spiritual welfare was monitored and abuses were corrected.[24] The answers given by the witch-suspects correspond to the

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[21] Ibid., Question 12. The preceding question asked whether the couple had plotted together alone at night; and question 13 pursued the theme of question 12 by asking where, when and how often the couple had made love, and who had paired them off together.

[22] Ibid., Question 14.

[23] StAN, Hexenakten 45 (M. Bittelmayr), 15 October 1626 (p.m.).

[24] I have not found a visitation questionnaire for Eichstätt. Peter Lang, however, has shown a shift in emphasis among visitors of southern German parishes in around 1600 from the correction of abuses among the clergy to the beliefs held by the community and the fabric of parish property, "Reform im Wandel. Die katholischen Visitationsi nterrogatorien des 16. und 17. Jahrhunderts", in Peter Lang and E.W. Zeeden (eds.), *Kirche und Visitation. Beiträge zur Erforschung der frühneuzeitlichen Visitationswesen in Europa*

'correct' answers which parishioners schooled in the catechism and the activities of the visiting clergy ought to have been able to give if they wanted to prevent intrusion into their affairs by the ecclesiastical and judicial machinery. The witch-suspects' responses to these biographical questions also reflect the pattern of personal profiling identified by Ralf-Peter Fuchs as part of the strategy of those who appealed against their prosecutions for witchcraft or presented suits against those who had slandered them as 'witches' at the Imperial Court in Speyer. These personal profiles were designed to present the injured party as honourable and unlikely therefore to have been a witch.[25] It is notable that none of the witch-suspects for whom this part of the transcript survives fails to present themselves as pious and honourable at this early stage of the interrogation process, even though many later admitted to fornication, adultery and bestiality. These suspects included Margretha Bittelmayr.

After Bittelmayr had answered the questions relating to her private life, the interrogators asked her a question which did not form part of the standard questionnaire: 'What she then thought the cause to be that she had been called to this place?'.[26] It was, however, put to all those who were brought before the Eichstätt witch commission whether or not they were witch-suspects. In the case of the witch-suspect Maria Mayr, for example, each member of the prison staff in the town hall was presented with the same question during the investigation by the witch commissioners into their unprofessional conduct.[27] Whilst it had not been included in the original interrogatory, the question did fit the purposes of this section of the questionnaire. The questions with which the interrogatory began were to be discussed 'before the evidence of

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(Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1984), pp. 131–90. The visitation was one method adopted by the Würzburg and Eichstätt bishops in their unsuccessful attempt to recatholicize the village of Bergrheinfeld, Weiss, "Reformation und Gegenreformation in Bergrheinfeld", pp. 283–341. For an account of how visitations were used by the Catholic Church in Germany, see, for example, Marc Forster, *The Counter-Reformation in the Villages: Religion and Reform in the Bishopric of Speyer, 1560–1720* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1992), pp. 77–83 and 97–8.

[25] Ralf-Peter Fuchs, *Hexerei und Zauberei vor dem Reichskammergericht. Nichtigkeiten und Injurien* (Wetzlar: Druckerei Bechstein, 1994), pp. 20–32 and 39–48.

[26] StAN, Hexenakten 45 (M. Bittelmayr), 15 October 1626 (a.m.).

[27] StAN, Hexenakten 48 (B. Halm), 26 November 1618, (J. Halm), 27 November 1618, (Bartle), [22 or 27?] November 1618, (L. Fendt), 1 December 1618. The bedwatcher Hans's interrogation began with an unusually direct question: 'whom he had accompanied out of the town hall, who was that?', ibid., (Hans), 23 November 1618.

the crime' was revealed to the suspect.[28] Up to this point in the interrogation therefore the commissioners had not told Bittelmayr of the crime with which she was charged, although the wife of a town scribe would doubtless have recognized that the men before whom she had been brought constituted the local witch commission. The question asking why she thought she had been brought before them served to introduce to the suspect the cause of her arrest and eased a problem inherent in the tone of the questions to be asked about the nature of her heresy. These questions followed two about the witch's denouncers (questions 23 and 24) and a recommendation that all the indications of suspicion against the defendant be placed before the defendant at this juncture.[29] They assumed on the basis of the accumulated evidence from other trials that the person who stood before them was guilty. Question 25, for example, simply asked 'How long ago was it that she had come into this vice?'.[30] If the suspect persisted in protesting her innocence, however, the prosecutors could not ask these questions; the alleged witch had at least to place herself in a position of guilt for the interrogation to progress. In order to avoid accidentally implicating herself in the witch conspiracy at this early stage the suspect had to construct a careful answer to the question asking why she found herself in the town hall. Bittelmayr's strategy, like most of the other witch-defendants in Eichstätt, was to claim that she did not know why she stood before the judges, but she added, in an unnecessary act of self-incrimination, that God knew that she had not seen anybody at the diabolical dances so she could not report anyone to the commission except those whom she had seen at wedding dances.[31]

The commissioners in Bittelmayr's case passed over her insufficient explanation of her presence before them and 'confronted' her with twenty of the twenty-one denunciations laid against her by previously convicted witches; the one with which she was not confronted was made by a suspect who was still in custody with her. In naming her denouncers, they had moved on to questions 23 and 24 of the interrogatory, and the damning evidence of Bittelmayr's involvement in the activities of the witch sect: '23. Whether N. denounced person in particular was known to her, and in what way'; and '24. Whether she was aware, so as

[28] StAN, Hexenakten 49 (Interrogatory, fair copy), f. 1r.
[29] Ibid., f. 3v.
[30] Ibid., Question 25.
[31] StAN, Hexenakten 45 (M. Bittelmayr), 15 October 1626 (a.m.).

not to doubt, that these persons had been executed for witchcraft.'[32] Bittelmayr's responses to the first four of these denunciations were transcribed by the interrogators' scribe; they were all negative. She had never seen the Lehenbauer from Landershofen; she did know the second, unnamed, denouncer, and was not aware of anything 'vnrechts' ('wrong' or 'unjust') about her, although she had only seen her at a wedding dance; the third convict she had seen, but did not know anything 'unjust' about her; and the Große Beckin of the Eastern Quarter of Eichstätt she did not know.[33] Bittelmayr's reactions to the remaining denunciations were summarized under a single article: '5. Of this and all other denunciations she knows herself innocent, but probably, she believes, that the persons said it, then she would confess it just as well, but that it was true, which God knew well'.[34] The interrogators' course of action at this point in other Eichstätt witch trials was usually to make a search for the witch's mark and then to torture the suspect in order to extract a confession of guilt.[35] In Bittelmayr's case, they departed from this course because they had other significant evidence from the defendant herself which could be dealt with under the recommendation in the interrogatory that all further suspicions against the suspect be raised at this time.

Two years previously Bittelmayr had sought counsel in the confessional about some unrecorded matter no doubt related to witchcraft, magic or superstition. Bittelmayr remembered the episode, 'but she had only done it for the sake of those whom she would not like to see in prison'.[36] She claimed, however, that she was 'now all pious: and wants to [show] herself innocent of the twenty denunciations [ ] read out loud above'.[37] Again, this issue, like the insubstantial testimonies of the various witnesses brought into their presence, was not pursued by the interrogators. Instead they moved on to a physical inspection for diabolical marks. This experience too was not specified in the prescriptions

[32] StAN, Hexenakten 49 (Interrogatory, fair copy), Questions 23 and 24.
[33] StAN, Hexenakten 45 (M. Bittelmayr), 15 October 1626 (a.m.).
[34] Ibid., 15 October 1626 (a.m.).
[35] For example, immediately after being confronted with the denunciations laid against him, Peter Porzin was searched for the witch's mark. Two suspect mark's were found, one on his left hip and another on his backside, neither of which bled when they were pricked. As the discovery of these marks did not prompt Porzin to confess, he was tortured, StAN, Hexenakten 45 (P. Porzin), 10 September 1627.
[36] StAN, Hexenakten 45 (M. Bittelmayr), 15 October 1626 (a.m.).
[37] Ibid., 15 October 1626 (a.m.).

of the interrogatory, although it was probably intended by the advice that all other suspicions held about a defendant should be examined here. The torturer Mathes Hörman was not able to find a mark on Bittelmayr's body, but the scribe recorded the conclusion (drawn by whom, one does not know) that such marks 'had to be on another secret place', i.e. Bittelmayr's genitalia or anus.[38] The commissioners then decided to defer torture and retire for lunch.

Throughout the afternoon session Bittelmayr obstinately maintained her innocence. An attempt to continue focusing on the morning's issues, the evidence against her, was abandoned in favour of question 25, 'how long ago was it that she had come into this vice?'. After light torture in which she 'flinched only a little, but was not quite raised from the stocks',[39] she made a beginning: 'She said she knows well that she sits there as a witch, but it happens as an injustice to her. She asks therefore that they should stop the torture; she wants to think about how long ago it was. It was likely to be about fifteen years'.[40] With this the interrogators were able to claim that Bittelmayr had given 'the right truth'[41] and to ignore the statement of innocence which preceded this piece of information ('it happens as an injustice to her'). The defendant was then led away to think about question 25 in further detail.

Friday 16 October began with Bittelmayr's revocation of this beginning and she was again tortured lightly, enough for her to be 'only frightened'.[42] Bittelmayr begged to be let down so that she might talk about her entry into the witches' sect, but she only proceeded to recall a wedding which she had attended at Weißenkirch with the Bonschabin, the Richelin, the Apothekerin and the Stricker Bastelin. They had ridden into the town drunk and merry and had caroused. It seems that this beginning was an answer to three questions about when, where and on what occasion she defected to the witch sect: question 25; question 26 'Whether this happened here or at other places, and where'; and question 27 'On what occasion and at what opportunity did she come to this vice?'.[43] As she refused to elaborate further on this episode, even when strongly examined, she was again tortured. Two points, however, should

[38] Ibid., 15 October 1626 (a.m.).
[39] Ibid., 15 October 1626 (p.m.).
[40] Ibid., 15 October 1626 (p.m.).
[41] Ibid., 15 October 1626 (p.m.).
[42] Ibid., 16 October 1626 (a.m.).
[43] StAN, Hexenakten 49 (Interrogatory, fair copy), Questions 26 and 27.

be noted about this fragmentary story. The first is that it was about a wedding and may have been inspired by the reference to marriage superstitions in question 14 of the interrogatory. Marriage certainly seems to have been on Bittelmayr's mind because she had already referred to weddings twice: once when observing that she could only name those whom she had seen at wedding dances; and again when she said that she had seen the second of her denouncers at a wedding celebration. The wedding motif occurs frequently throughout the Eichstätt confession narratives, especially when the suspects told of the seduction into the sect and the atmosphere of the clandestine nocturnal gatherings. Walburga Knab, for example, also stated that everything at the witches' sabbath was 'as if at a wedding'.[44] This was not an unusual suggestion. During the first decade of the sixteenth century, a witch-suspect from the Tyrol was allegedly elected a queen of 'Engelland' ('land of angels') and was married to the Devil with all the trappings of a royal wedding.[45] The second point is that Bittelmayr's relationships with the other women mentioned were not ones of conflict; and her chosen wedding guests had all been executed, as the scribe had noted later in the margin.[46] They had got drunk, travelled and caroused together in order to celebrate someone else's happiness. Bittelmayr was therefore drawing on positive relationships in her answers to the judges' questions, a characteristic of her subsequent answers and the responses given by other defendants in other trials.

The second experience of torture on the Friday was stronger. Bittelmayr was stretched on the strappado. This was followed by a different tale of her seduction by the Devil based on the same three questions which had inspired her first abortive attempt to construct a narrative. Twenty-seven years previously she had been in the service of the old Krämbsin. There she had slept with an 'old, cautious person' named Anna who 'handled her and rolled around with her like a male person'.[47] If Bittelmayr felt any moral unease about this sexual experience, she did not express it in her narrative even though it contradicted the impression created on the previous day that she had been chaste before her marriage. It was followed immediately by: 'after that she won the

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[44] StAN, Hexenakten 45 (W. Knab), 7 August 1621.

[45] Richard van Dülmen, "Imaginationen des Teuflischen. Nächtliche Zusammenkünfte, Hexentänze, Teufelssabbate", in Dülmen (ed.), *Hexenwelten*, pp. 94–130 (p. 117).

[46] StAN, Hexenakten 45 (M. Bittelmayr), 16 October 1626 (a.m.).

[47] Ibid., 16 October 1626 (a.m.).

love of her present husband'.[48] She concluded this version of events, however, with her actual seduction by the Devil—'until finally the evil enemy appeared to her in his [her husband's] form, with whom she committed improprieties'[49]—and a description of the transaction which then took place to bring her into the witch sect. The interrogators seem therefore to have appended questions 28 to 34 of their questionnaire to the three originally asked of her on this day of interrogation. These dealt with the suspect's meetings with the Devil, what he desired of her and what she promised to him.[50] Three of these questions (30, 32 and 33) were repeated, slightly altered, in the text by the scribe: 'What he then desired?'; 'But whether the evil enemy otherwise desired nothing further?'; and 'Whether she promised it to him?'.[51]

These questions about the Devil's desires of her were repeated in the afternoon session. Special emphasis seems to have been placed on the thirty-fourth question: 'Whether she did not disown God and all the saints, and promise to harm people, livestock and fruit; with what words and in what form this happened?'.[52] Bittelmayr confirmed her earlier testimony that she had, unwillingly, rejected God and all the saints and added 'Otherwise that she did everything to them which is detestable to the world, like harming people and livestock'.[53] In asking the defendant here whether she had promised to harm people, livestock and crops, the interrogators interrupted the sequence of the interrogatory. Strictly, the question had been correctly included among those dealing with the suspect's seduction into the sect and her relations with the Devil because its subject was the promise to perform harmful acts rather than the specific instances of her malevolence. Unlike true heretics, however, the Eichstätt witches were a product of a circumstance which they did not always fully understand. Responses to questions about the nature of their heresy were invariably short, often a mere 'yes' or 'no' or an almost verbatim repetition of the question itself, and lacked detail. In answer to the question 'What he [the Devil] then desired?', the court scribe recorded that Bittelmayr said 'nothing until he came to her again on the second day, and performed improprieties with her, she [promised]

[48] Ibid., 16 October 1626 (a.m.).
[49] Ibid., 16 October 1626 (a.m.).
[50] StAN, Hexenakten 49 (Interrogatory, fair copy), Questions 28–34.
[51] StAN, Hexenakten 45 (M. Bittelmayr), 16 October 1626 (a.m.).
[52] StAN, Hexenakten 49 (Interrogatory, fair copy), Question 34.
[53] StAN, Hexenakten 45 (M. Bittelmayr), 16 October 1626 (p.m.).

him only to be his'.[54] This particular response to this question recurs often in the extant Eichstätt witch-trial transcripts and its frequency may be explained in one of two ways.[55] The promise to give oneself over to the Devil only may reflect the language of lovers proceeding towards marriage, as well as the marriage vows themselves.[56] The repetition of the whole response, including the reappearance of the Devil and the fornication, in diverse confessions suggests, however, that, even if the suspects were drawing on their experiences of courtship, it was the interrogators who encouraged the phraseology of the covenant. The lack of any imaginative expansion on the awesome event of the Devil's second unarranged meeting with his new convert also suggests that the defendant could not comprehend such a situation.

It seems that the defendants felt more comfortable expanding on episodes of malevolence; they could, after all, be grounded in real events. In Bittelmayr's case, as with many others in Eichstätt, the judges took the decision at the end of Friday's interrogation to ask her to reflect on 'whom, how, when, and in what circumstances she harmed people and livestock',[57] that is they passed on to questions 64 and 68.[58] This is not because the witches' supposed malevolence had assumed a greater significance for the witch commissioners since the interrogatory had originally been drawn up. They remained unconcerned by the high proportion of unsubstantiated acts of harmful witchcraft confessed by the defendants and were willing to overlook the consistent negative responses which they received from the witnesses they were able to subpoena for each act. I think, rather, that the sequential logic of the commissioners' questionnaire was inappropriate for this part of the interrogation process. The defendant was able to make sense of personal tragedy, either her own or her neighbours, in supernatural terms

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[54] Ibid., 16 October 1626 (p.m.).

[55] In 1617, Barbara Ruoser, for example, had given much the same response to this question. After the Devil had come to her a second time and fornicated with her, she promised, or rather desired, to be his, StAN, Hexenakten 48 (B. Ruoser), 14 December 1617 (p.m.).

[56] For a discussion of marriage promises, see Sandra Cavallo and Simona Cerutti, "Female Honor and the Social Control of Reproduction in Piedmont between 1600 and 1800", in Edward Muir and Guido Ruggiero (eds.), *Sex and Gender in Historical Perspective* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990), pp. 73–109.

[57] StAN, Hexenakten 45 (M. Bittelmayr), 16 October 1626 (p.m.).

[58] StAN, Hexenakten 49 (Interrogatory, fair copy), Questions 64 and 68. Both were variations on whether, why and how the defendant had harmed anyone, and who had helped her.

(providential as well as magical) and the interrogators found it expedient to exploit the suspect's comprehension of this element of witchcraft in order to promote the flow of testimony. During the course of the next four days of her interrogation, therefore, from Saturday 17 to Wednesday 21 October, Bittelmayr was forced to confess to nine acts of harmful witchcraft.[59]

On Friday 23 October, the interrogators had Bittelmayr ratify her confession and she affirmed that she was not able to relate any more about her malevolent acts.[60] On 24 October the judges resumed the sequence of the interrogatory and began questioning her about her sacrilegious acts, the congregations of the witch sect and her spiritual state, the subjects of questions 35 to 62.[61] These points were also covered during the following nine days of interrogation.[62] Within this series of questions the witch commissioners concentrated on those about Bittelmayr's fellow witches (questions 48–50).[63] She spent seven days simply identifying twenty-nine people whom she had 'seen' at witch gatherings. Thereafter the witch commissioners briefly interrogated Bittelmayr on the remaining topics covered by their interrogatory, although they did so slightly out of sequence: the making of weather (9 November);[64] the exhumation of children's corpses (10 November);[65] entry into other people's cellars (12 November);[66] and entry into stalls and bedchambers and disharmony between spouses (13 November).[67] Finally, on 14 November, a Saturday, Bittelmayr was read a summary of her whole confession, questioned

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[59] StAN, Hexenakten 45 (M. Bittelmayr), 17 and 19–21 October 1626.
[60] Ibid., 23 October 1626.
[61] Ibid., 24 October 1626.
[62] Ibid., 26–27 and 29–31 October, 2 and 5–7 November 1626.
[63] StAN, Hexenakten 49 (Interrogatory, fair copy), questions 48 to 50 asked about specific incidences which the witch commissioners believed would have occurred at each gathering of a witches' convent. Question 48 concerned who served at the feast table; question 49 deals with accomplices generally; and question 50 asked about dancing partners. In a number of other questions a defendant was also asked who had helped or advised her.
[64] Ibid., Question 73.
[65] Ibid., Questions 67, 71 and 72.
[66] Ibid., Question 74.
[67] Ibid., Questions 69, 74 and 75, and 70 respectively. Stalls were not directly referred to in the questions of the interrogatory, although they were a consistent feature of the answers given by the suspects and the annotations made in the margins of the transcripts by the scribes. Entering into animal stalls was therefore probably implied in question 69.

on her new spiritual status[68] and bound over to reflect on her crimes and punishment for the next three days (Monday 16 until Wednesday 18 November) as prescribed by the *Carolina*.[69] On 20 November 1626, the sentence of death was executed on Margretha Bittelmayr.

Denunciations

That the interrogators spent most of their time extracting the names of witch-accomplices in this and other interrogations confirms that they were more concerned with the spiritual aspect of the crime of witchcraft than with the malevolence which characterized the witches' alleged treatment of their neighbours. Such lists were important to the witch commissioners' crusade to eradicate the menace of the heresy of witchcraft from the prince-bishopric because they were the only means by which other witch-heretics could be brought to justice. The very secrecy and supernatural powers of the alleged sect members disguised the potential manifestations of false belief by which real heretics and followers of heathen cults gave themselves away: openly held beliefs, preaching and proselytising, and ascetic lifestyles.[70] The paucity of accusations originating from within the community and the inability of witnesses to confirm acts of harmful witchcraft also served to obscure

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[68] Ibid., Questions 77–79.

[69] Article 79 of the *Constitutio criminalis Carolina*, Gänstaller, "Zur Geschichte des Hexenwahns", p. 61. Gänstaller suggests that the Eichstätt interrogators consistently abused this provision, which also permitted visits from morally upstanding people and prohibited the consumption of too much strong drink by the condemned (so that they might not avoid the full experience of their punishment). It is difficult to assess the accuracy of her suggestion. The period given for reflection was not relevant to the interrogation process and consequently details of what happened to the suspect after she was sentenced were not recorded by the commissioners' scribes. As most suspects had to wait to be executed with others whose interrogations were not concluded, most had more than three days in which to reflect on their lives.

[70] To the Cathars and Waldensians in this respect, one might also add Lutherans who refused to accept the priests and liturgy imposed on them by non-resident Catholic overlords, as happened throughout the seventeenth century in Bergrheinfeld, Weiss, "Reformation und Gegenreformation in Bergrheinfeld". There were also individuals like the miller Domenico Scandella who created their own unique cosmological world-views and cults like the *benandanti* which subscribed to Christianized versions of pagan fertility rituals. In both cases they were unwilling to renounce their world-views despite the persistent attentions of the authorities, Carlo Ginzburg, *The Cheese and the Worms: The Cosmos of a Sixteenth-century Miller*, trans. John and Anne Tedeschi (London: Penguin Books, 1992), and id., *Ecstasies*.

the alleged witches from the authorities in Eichstätt. Several sightings at the supposed nocturnal gatherings of the sect, the revelries in other people's cellars or the exhumations of children's corpses were therefore the only available *indicia* that an individual might be a witch.

The denunciation therefore lay at the heart of the witch persecutions in Eichstätt. Its importance to the witch commissioners is highlighted in their handling of the interrogation of Hans Stigeliz, master of the Spital. Whilst under interrogation in May 1628, Stigeliz became too ill to continue with the trial. His interrogators decided to dispense with normal judicial procedures and press Stigeliz to name further accomplices before executing him, by beheading, on the following day, 27 May, in the privacy of the town hall.[71] During his final day of interrogation, Stigeliz denounced forty-one individuals as witches.[72] In their haste to complete this section of Stigeliz's confession before his death, the witch commissioners seem content to have extracted a mere list of names. In contrast he had identified the first twenty-three accomplices over two days (23 and 25 May) giving the usual additional details: when and where he had seen them; what they were doing and wearing; and what form their demons had taken.[73] When he was executed, Stigeliz had not finished confessing all the usual sins perpetrated since his conversion to the witch-heresy; entry into other people's bedchambers, cellars and animal stalls, for example, and the making of destructive

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[71] Capital punishment for witchcraft in Eichstätt was legally by burning, alive, in public. In practice, however, convicted witches tended to be executed by beheading, in public, to spare them the prolonged agony of execution by fire. It is not clear from Stigeliz's file whether his body was burned in the usual place after he had received the less dramatic punishment in private.

[72] StAN, Hexenakten 45 (H. Stigeliz), 26 May 1628.

[73] He claimed, for example, to have seen *Bürgermeister* Rehel six times at the nocturnal gatherings of the witches. The first time, twenty years ago, he had arrived at the Linsenwiesen on a pitchfork. He wore black clothes with silver buttons in his waistcoat and a silver belt. His paramour wore a blue dress. The second time, eighteen years ago, he had seen Rehel at a dance on the Wascheggerten. He wore clothes decorated with open-work and his paramour appeared in the form of a handsome young woman. They went off to the side with one another. And so on for the remaining four sightings, StAN, Hexenakten 45 (H. Stigeliz), 23 May 1628. It should be noted that such detail only appears in the extant transcripts from 1621 when Walburga Knab stated that she had seen Barbara Ehrenfrid on Linsenwiesen the previous autumn. They had done everything together that everyone else had, they had eaten, drunk and enjoyed other luxuries and danced with the Devil, StAN, Hexenakten 45 (W. Knab), 9 August 1621 (p.m.). Before this date, accomplices were just listed by name, giving only cursory details (noting if they had already been executed, who their spouse or other close relative was, where they lived, etc.).

weather had not been covered during the course of the interrogation. Names were therefore of more importance to the interrogators than any other aspect of the witches' confession narratives. To ensure that Stigeliz received the appropriate punishment for his heresy on earth, he had also been denied the three days for reflection and the confession of his other sins prescribed by the *Carolina* in preparation for his execution. His interrogators appear to have been certain, however, that he did not die in the sin of witchcraft, that he had been sufficiently reconciled to the Church and to God, and that he had received due punishment and absolution for his heresy on earth: they recorded that he died 'Christlich' ('as a Christian').[74]

The interrogators' use of these extensive lists of accomplices contributed to the discrepancy between the gender ratios among those denounced during the trial process on the one hand and the proportions of men and women who were then arrested on the other. A suspect like Bittelmayr was brought to trial on the strength of an accumulation of denunciations, usually about a dozen or more, made by previously convicted or imprisoned witches. The interrogators did not, however, present individual witch-defendants with a predetermined list of possible accomplices drawn from previous sets of denunciations and then ask her to confirm or deny their presence at a sabbath; that is not how the final phase of witch persecution escalated in Eichstätt. If this had been the case one would expect to find a greater correspondence between the lists of accomplices produced by the witch-defendants with few additional, unprompted, denunciations in each case than has been possible in my research. Certainly one would expect in such circumstances that a higher proportion of the relatively small number of accomplices denounced by Bittelmayr (thirty) would have been identified by future, as well as previous, defendants leading to their arrests by the interrogators' officers. Over 55% of her alleged accomplices, however, were never summoned before the commission. This statistic would seem to be about average for Eichstätt. Of the accomplices identified by Walburga Knab, of whom over 90% were female, about 58% were not arrested by the witch commission. The first of the surviving trial transcripts shows that about 45% of the eighty-two people named as accomplices by Barbara

[74] StAN, Hexenakten 45 (H. Stigeliz), 27 May 1628. This is the only reference to a convicted witch's spiritual state immediately before execution throughout the entire collection of Eichstätt Hexenakten. It suggests, I think, that the witch commissioners were perhaps uneasy at leaving an unfinished confession on record without comment.

Ruoser were not later arrested as witches, even though the persecution still had almost fourteen years to run.[75] Rather than being guided by the witch commissioners to confirm existing denunciations, therefore, the suspect volunteered names, and that dynamic, once the persecutions became established in the principality, is the main reason why a higher number of women were arrested for the crime of witchcraft: the gender of the accused and the ties with which she was bound to various sections of the community.

Denunciations—the role of the interrogators

As Stigeliz's case shows, however, the witch commissioners were able to manipulate the judicial processes to fit their own ends. They also ignored series of denunciations which had accumulated against certain individuals. A number of the local clergy were identified as accomplices by some of the witch-suspects, but they were not subsequently brought to trial. Among them, Christoff Otto von Muckenthal was accused of being an accomplice in five of the extant lists of denunciations,[76] Herr Vogel in four,[77] and Herrn Welcker and Albrecht Schintelbeck in three each.[78] The names of another four clergymen each appear twice in the extant depositions.[79] By themselves these figures do not seem to amount

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[75] These are minimum percentages as not all of those denounced by Knab or Ruoser can be identified. It may be that among these unidentifiable persons, several others were not later arrested as witches. The slight increase in the proportion of named accomplices who were not indicted by the witch commission is to be expected as the suspect under interrogation had to cast her net wider in the search for accomplices among a declining pool of possibilities, and the interrogators could only process a few cases at any one time.

[76] StAN, Hexenakten 45 (M. Bittelmayr), 2 November 1626, (P. Porzin), 23 September 1627, and (H. Stigeliz), 25 May 1628; and StAN, Hexenakten 48 (U. Funk), 10 October 1626, and (Part transcript—unidentified female), no date.

[77] StAN, Hexenakten 45 (W. Knab), 11 August 1621, and (H. Stigeliz), 26 May 1628; and StAN, Hexenakten 48 (U. Funk), 7 October 1626, and (V. Lanng), 18 August 1618.

[78] Welcker was denounced as an accomplice in StAN, Hexenakten 45 (M. Bittelmayr), 2 November 1626, and (H. Stigeliz), 26 May 1628, and StAN, Hexenakten 48 (U. Funk), 7 October 1626. Schintelbeck was denounced in StAN, Hexenakten 45 (P. Porzin), 24 September 1627, and (H. Stigeliz), 25 May 1628, and StAN, Hexenakten 48 (U. Funk), 9 October 1626.

[79] These were: the former parish dean Gerstner, StAN, Hexenakten 45 (W. Knab), 11 August 1621, and (H. Stigeliz), 26 May 1628; Barthlme Ging at the cathedral, StAN, Hexenakten 45 (M. Bittelmayr), 31 October 1626, and (P. Porzin), 24 September 1627; Hans Vlaich Humpiß, the dean of the cathedral, StAN, Hexenakten 45

to much. One must remember, however, that for the majority of the witch interrogations in Eichstätt there remains no substantial record. The actual significance of these accumulated denunciations is best measured by seeing who else appears on the same lists, and how many times, and then looking at the transcript of their interrogation to find out how many denunciations were laid against them before their arrest. In the same set of denunciation lists which can be abstracted from the interrogation depositions, Margretha Bittelmayr's name occurs just once; we know from the transcript of her interrogation, however, that twenty-one denunciations were laid against her.[80] Peter Porzin was denounced by only two of the witch-suspects for whose trials substantial sources are extant, although he was actually named by fifteen previously convicted witches;[81] and Christoph Lauterer who, like Bittelmayr, was arrested on the basis of twenty-one denunciations made by other defendants, was accused of being a witch in just three of the extant interrogations.[82] There is a strong possibility, therefore, that the clergymen whose names occur in the available material as witch-accomplices were denounced by many other witch-defendants in Eichstätt. The commissioners did not comment on why they ignored particular denunciations, but it is likely that it was the status of these clerics which protected them from prosecution as witches. Muckenthal's name would suggest that he was a minor nobleman and therefore a member of the only social caste to remain untouched by the witch persecutions locally. Vogel was the vicar of the cathedral, and Hans Vlaich Humpiß was its dean. Welcker would sometimes act as a 'spy' for the commissioners, reporting his conversations with the suspects in custody.[83]

These clergymen were not the only potential suspects treated lightly by the witch commission. Several other individuals evaded arrest for

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(P. Porzin), 24 September 1627, and StAN, Hexenakten 48 (U. Funk), 9 October 1626; and Joachim Humpiß, StAN, Hexenakten 45 (M. Bittelmayr), 2 November 1626, and (H. Stigeliz), 26 May 1628.

[80] The denunciation of Bittelmayr was made by Kunigunda Bonschab, StAN, Hexenakten 48 (K. Bonschab), 31 January 1618 (a.m.).

[81] The two denouncers were Margretha Hözler and Margretha Bittelmayr, StAN, Hexenakten 45 (P. Porzin—denunciations), nos. 6 and 8; see also ibid., (M. Bittelmayr), 7 November 1626.

[82] The three denouncers referred to here were Peter Porzin, Michael Hochenschildt and Hans Stigeliz, StAN, Hexenakten 49 (C. Lauterer—denunciations), f. 1r, and StAN, Hexenakten 45 (P. Porzin), 24 September 1627, (M. Hochenschildt), 23 March 1628, and (H. Stigeliz), 25 May 1628.

[83] StAN, Hexenakten 45 (V. Lanng), 13 July 1618 (p.m.).

witchcraft despite being alive, residing under the prince-bishop's jurisdiction and appearing twice or more on the extant lists of denunciations. Among them were three men, Hans Danner,[84] Georg Schwarz[85] and Paul Gabler,[86] and two women, Herr Barthlme Ging's cook Ursl[87] and Frau Dr Baumgartner.[88] It is not clear why Danner and Schwarz never came before the witch commissioners. They seem to have been residing in the town of Eichstätt when they were denounced, but they did not occupy positions of any ecclesiastical or political influence. Danner was a *Lebzelter*, a baker of the regional speciality gingerbread, and consequently a member of the craft group worst hit by the persecution from 1617 (see Appendix 2). Schwarz was a servant and a member of a profession barely touched by the witch commissioners. The two women, one of whom was also a servant, seem to have enjoyed the protection offered by men of authority. Ging was one of the clergymen denounced twice in the extant trial records but who escaped prosecution.[89] Dr Baumgartner would sometimes sit in on sessions of the interrogations conducted by the witch commission; he may therefore have been able to establish himself in a social circle which included senior Eichstätt clergy and which perhaps protected his wife.[90]

The case of Paul Gabler, however, offers the best demonstration of the witch commissioners' selective approach to identifying and arresting the alleged accomplices. Gabler was the secretary to the *Hofrat* and therefore one of the most senior secular figures in Eichstätt. Whilst only two denunciations are to be found against him in the interrogation transcripts, three extant versions of a list of all the denunciations made against him show that Gabler was denounced by twenty-one suspects under interrogation, the same number as had denounced Margretha

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[84] Ibid., (P. Porzin), 23 September 1627, and (H. Stigeliz), 23 May 1628.

[85] Ibid., (H. Stigeliz), 25 May 1628, and StAN, Hexenakten 48 (U. Funk), 9 October 1626.

[86] StAN, Hexenakten 45 (P. Porzin), 24 September 1627, and (H. Stigeliz), 25 May 1628.

[87] Ibid., (M. Bittelmayr), 31 October 1626, and (W. Knab), 11 August 1621.

[88] Ibid., (H. Stigeliz), 25 May 1628, and StAN, Hexenakten 48 (U. Funk), 17 October 1626.

[89] This is not to suggest that being in the employ of someone less likely to be arrested for witchcraft was a guarantee of immunity for the employee. Maria, Herr von Biberbach's cook, for example, was executed for witchcraft on 18 July 1623, BundesA ASt Frankfurt FSg.2/1-F 4 668 (Eichstätt A-K), frame 38.

[90] See StAN, Hexenakten 45 (P. Porzin), 10 September 1627 (a.m.), for example, when he sat on the indictment of Porzin with the *Landvogt*, the chancellor, the *Stadtrichter*, Secretary Gabler, and Drs Kircher, Schwarzkonz and Kolb.

Bittelmayr and Christoph Lauterer. Of these denunciations, one was made in 1622 and the remaining twenty between 1627 and 1630.[91] It was precisely in these four years that men became more vulnerable to arrest as witches. Sixteen of the twenty-seven men executed for witchcraft after 1617 were prosecuted during this short period, and many of them came from politically-active families. Although the commissioners were taking an active interest in those men whose names kept coming up in the confessions, they decided to leave Gabler until later. Their decision was no doubt influenced by his status within the polity, and also perhaps because they knew him well—like Baumgartner he sat in on some sessions of the interrogations.[92] Whilst there was still a pool of women and less influential men to draw defendants from, Gabler was safe from prosecution.

This is not to suggest that Westerstetten and his advisors were averse, theoretically, to prosecuting senior members of the secular hierarchy or the clergy. Whether or not the encounter actually happened, the point of the anecdote relating the alleged discussion between the prince and Joachim Meggelin about the number of denunciations required to secure a condemnation for witchcraft seems to have been that the ecclesiastical officials themselves were in danger of being caught up in the drive to eradicate the witch sect from the territory. At least one clergyman, Johann Reichard, the priest at the Spital in Eichstätt, was arrested on 6 September 1624 on a charge of witchcraft, although he refused to confess and died on 20 November 1644 whilst still under house arrest.[93] Generally, however, the witch commissioners were reluctant to act against the households of men who wielded a significant amount of authority in the principality. Whilst status may well have afforded some protection to these men and their families, one might also conjecture that the interrogators were unable to conceive that the heresy of witchcraft might be widespread among themselves and their peers. It appears that the witch commissioners' preconceived notions of what characteristics the stereotypical witch should possess enabled them to manipulate the interrogation process, perhaps unwittingly, to exclude

[91] StAN, Hexenakten 43 (P. Gabler—denunciations), and StAN, Hexenakten 48 (P. Gabler—denunciations) and (P. Gabler—table of denunciations). The extant denunciations are to be found in StAN, Hexenakten 45 (P. Porzin), 24 September 1627, and (H. Stigeliz), 25 May 1628.

[92] Ibid., (P. Porzin), 10 September 1627 (a.m.).

[93] StAN, Hexenakten 47 (J. Reichard).

certain, usually male, individuals from prosecution. An indirect consequence of the drive 'from above' to exterminate the heretical witch sect in the principality was an emphasis on the only physical attribute which dominated the ecclesiastical stereotype of the witch-figure, her embodiment as a woman. In part, therefore, both demonology and the processes of law determined that a greater proportion of women than men were to be found among the witch-suspects brought before the witch commissioners in Eichstätt.

Denunciations—the role of the witch-suspect

Whilst the processes of arrest and interrogation reveal that women were more frequently targeted by the witch commissioners in Eichstätt, and the gender of a potential witch-defendant played an important role in deciding his or her fate, they do not adequately explain why women, especially as the final wave of witch-hunting progressed, continued to name a much greater proportion of women than men among their alleged accomplices. Fear and reputation did not make particular women more likely accomplices in the minds of the suspects. With the exceptions of Magdalena Pößl and Anna Harding, whose case will be examined in chapters 5 and 6, there is no evidence that any of the women brought before the Eichstätt interrogators had a reputation for deploying witchcraft or associated skills in any context, whether to avenge themselves or aid their neighbours. Anna Widman of Berching and her maid Kunigunda Pronner were arrested on the basis of an accusation of malevolent witchcraft, but their cases were not part of the wider persecution and their names do not feature among the accomplices listed by the witches of the district of Eichstätt. Anna Ruhr is one of the few suspects who may have been denounced because she was feared as a witch. She claimed to stand before the commissioners on account of a false reputation for witchcraft;[94] her interrogators did not, unfortunately, comment on this claim, and the denunciations laid against her, which may have included malicious gossip and rumour, no longer exist. As the wife of the court cobbler, Ruhr was, however, of the same social class as her denouncers which suggests that at least some of the denunciations were made against her because her witch-neighbours would have

[94] StAN, Hexenakten 49 (A. Ruhr), 7 April 1620.

expected to have seen her at the communal gatherings on which they based their versions of the witches' nocturnal sabbaths. In general, however, conflict, fear and reputation for cunning or witch powers were of minor or no importance in the dynamics of witch denunciation in Eichstätt.

Rather than assuming that witch-suspects might try to name accomplices with an existing reputation for witchcraft or magic or neighbours with whom they were not intimate, one should regard the lists of denunciations produced under interrogation as indicators of social cohesion. They reveal close and strong familial or professional relationships between the witch-suspects and the people whom they identified as fellow heretics. I do not want to equate the closeness and strength of relationships in early modern Eichstätt with a nostalgic image of rural or small-town harmony. One can find many examples of malicious gossip and enmity among neighbours throughout the trial transcripts, but they were not the primary causes of witch denunciation in Eichstätt. One cannot therefore argue, as Macfarlane has done, that these instances of discord characterized the society from which they were drawn; nor can one infer, in the manner of Walz, that localized tensions were played out as witchcraft episodes. Rather, the testimonies constructed by the witch-suspects reveal the complex relationships which each individual maintained with her neighbours on an unexceptional daily basis. They reveal a community bound by a series of personal, familial, household and professional interests and emotions. The variety of relationships which can be found in a witch's confession, especially in the naming of her accomplices, contributed to the gender imbalance among the witch-defendants.

The section of the interrogation about the defendant's heretical acts and accomplices presented an opportunity for her to construct plausible narratives which would appease the commissioners who tended to resort to torture when she appeared, through both the knowledge of her innocence and her incomprehension of her interrogators' unfamiliar demonology, to be recalcitrant. The defendant was asked to discuss familiar rituals and events: baptism;[95] sexual relations;[96] worship and

[95] Ibid., (Interrogatory, fair copy), Question 35.

[96] Ibid., Questions 36 and 37 concerned further sexual relations with the Devil; and Question 52 asked about her infidelities with other witches.

blasphemy;[97] communal meals;[98] and dancing.[99] The Eichstätt commissioners were, however, never able to elicit from the defendants who stood before them a description of the nocturnal gatherings which corresponded to contemporary pictorial and demonological representations of witches' sabbaths, a frightful image of the world-turned-upside-down, of utter disorder, social, natural and spiritual, which took place at a location, often on the Blocksberg, far removed from the witch's own home (Ill. 1). What they got instead were brief, mundane recollections and stories which had their origins in real experiences of Catholic rites, intimate encounters and public gatherings, and which were set on the hills and in the fields surrounding the town. In her prosaic account of the witches' gatherings Bittelmayr claimed that they took place regularly, every three or six weeks on a Tuesday, Thursday or Saturday, 'at the Schießhütten, and on Schotenwiesen, Kugelberg and other places'.[100] Of these locations, the Kugelberg still exists to the north of the town, just beyond the line of its former walls, and was farmed in the early modern period,[101] and the Schießhütten is marked on contemporary images of the town (Ill. 2).[102] Occasionally the gatherings took place much closer to home or had an obvious personal connection. Barbara Ruoser included the horse market in the town of Eichstätt among her gathering places;[103] and Anna Widman of Berching went to the Geißbühl at Irlahüll (about half way between Berching and Eichstätt) where she had been born and brought up.[104]

Once at the gathering there was all sorts of food to eat, and dancing, but the feasting and revelry were imagined by the witch-suspects as

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[97] Ibid., Questions 42 and 43 addressed the issue of worship of the Devil; Questions 55 and 56 asked about blaspheming against God and the saints; and Questions 57 to 63 were designed to elucidate her attitude towards and abuses of the sacraments and practices of the Catholic church.

[98] Ibid., Questions 45 to 48 asked about various aspects of feasting during the nocturnal sabbaths.

[99] Ibid., Question 50.

[100] StAN, Hexenakten 45 (M. Bittelmayr), 27 October 1626.

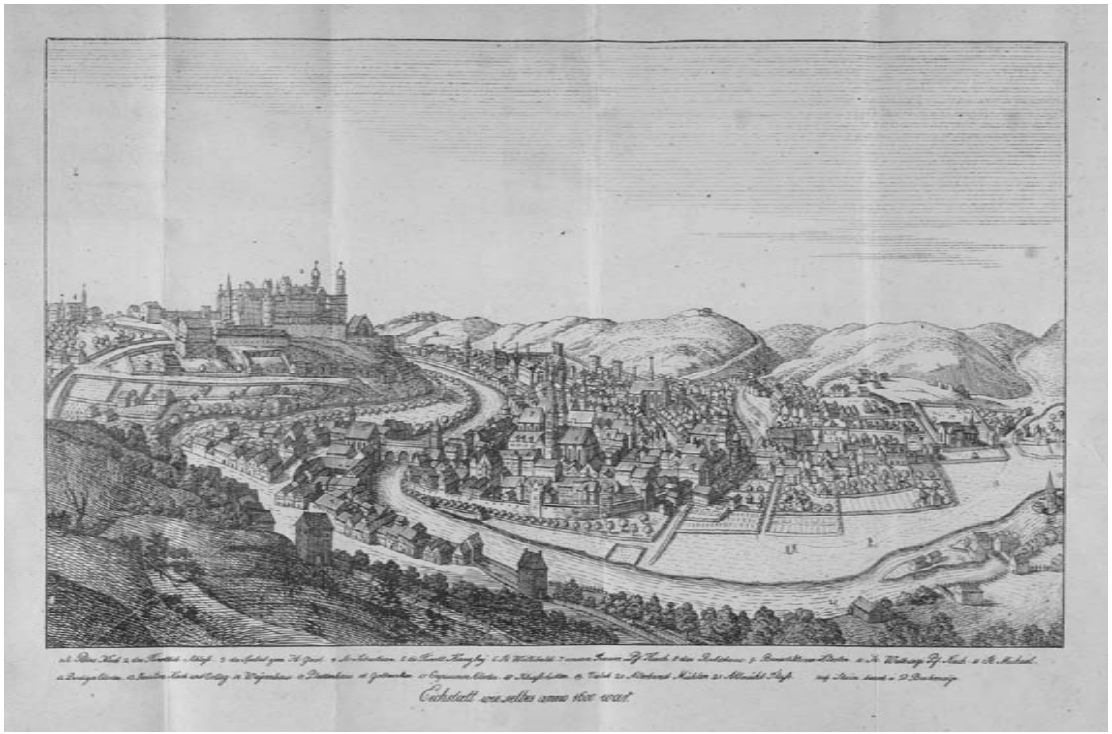
[101] Jacob Rabel's will shows that he intended to bequeath a field on the Kugelberg to his brother Georg, StAN, Hexenakten 48 (J. Rabel—will), f. 6r.

[102] Other locations for the local witches' gatherings included: the Linsenwiesen (which may have been an alternative name for the Schotenwiesen); Wascheggerten just to the south of the town of Eichstätt; Blumenberg to the west of the town on the opposite bank of the Altmühl to Willibaldsburg, the bishop's principal residence; and Petersberg which is directly south of the Kugelberg.

[103] StAN, Hexenakten 48 (B. Ruoser), 15 December 1617 (p.m.).

[104] Ibid., (A. Widman of Berching), 18 July 1618 (p.m.).

Ill. 1. 'Witches' sabbath', woodcut, from Johannes Praetorius, *Blockes-Berges Verrichtung* (1668). Herzog August Bibliothek, Wolfen-büttel [M: Hr 335 (2)]. Reproduced with kind permission.



Ill. 2. Reproduction of a view of Eichstätt, c. 1600, from Franz Xaver Lang, *Topographische Beschreibung und Geschichte der königl. Baier. Kreishauptstadt Eichstätt* (Eichstätt: Philipp Bronner, 1815), between pp. 78 and 79. British Library, London [10240. aaa.29]. Reproduced with kind permission.

ordinary episodes of communal activity; they rarely inserted diabolical details into their descriptions of them and then only when they were asked direct questions about, for example, the presence of bread and salt. Even with the help of these questions, the Eichstätt interrogators were unable to diabolize the suspects' testimonies by forcing them to conjure up bacchanalic scenes. Margretha Bittelmayr could not remember, for example, whether bread and salt were present at the meals.[105] The commissioners also had to make do with a rather peripheral Devil and insubstantial demons. The Devil appeared in Bittelmayr's narrative only to take her to and from the sabbath on a stick or a goat and, once at the gathering, as the object of undescribed reverence.[106] The demons appeared throughout her testimony merely as the companions of her accomplices. Each description of a witch-accomplice would end with the human form taken by that person's paramour. For the first accomplice named by Bittelmayr, for example, she stated only: 'but her [Penner's] demon appeared in the form of a citizen'.[107] There is nothing diabolical about this description. Egina Penner's husband was a councillor and Bittelmayr would therefore have often seen her in the company of a male citizen.

Throughout Bittelmayr's account of the sabbath rituals there are only two suggestions of disorder. The first and most effective attempt to provide her interrogators with a glimpse of the supposed topsy-turvy world of the nocturnal gatherings is to be found in her answer to the question, recorded in the transcript, 'Whether light was also available?', an abstracted part of question 48 of the interrogatory.[108] She replied: 'Yes, torches.

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[105] StAN, Hexenakten 49 (Interrogatory, fair copy), Question 46, includes the subquestion: '. . . whether bread and salt were present . . .'. Bittelmayr's answer reads: 'Bread and salt she could not remember, . . .', StAN, Hexenakten 45 (M. Bittelmayr), 27 October 1626.

[106] Ibid., (M. Bittelmayr), 27 October 1626, 'at any time reverence was shown to the supreme Devil who always sat there'. Again this is a rather unimaginative response to StAN, Hexenakten 49, (Interrogatory, fair copy), Question 44. An alternative answer to this question was to state that one had to kiss the Devil on the backside, although this was not at all common, Jonathan Durrant, "The *Osculum Infame*: Heresy, Secular Culture and the Image of the Witches' Sabbath", in Karen Harvey (ed.), *The Kiss in History* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2005), pp. 36–59.

[107] StAN, Hexenakten 45 (M. Bittelmayr), 29 October 1626. The demons of the other people whom Bittelmayr identified as witches on this day had assumed the shapes of a brewer, a fairly old woman, a young student, a squire and another citizen.

[108] Ibid., 27 October 1626; and StAN, Hexenakten 49 (Interrogatory, fair copy), Question 48, '. . . whether and how they saw in the dark night; what kind of light was present; and from where this, as everything else, was brought?'.

Moreover, the Devil had stuck the lights in the backsides of the old wives . . .'.[109] In the second example she claimed that 'one danced before and after the meal, but no order was kept during it'.[110] Compared with near-contemporary portrayals of peasant feasting in which the participants were depicted as drunkards, gluttons and fornicators, this statement of misrule seems unimaginative and innocuous (Ill. 3). It hints more at Bittelmayr's tipsy journey to the wedding festivities at Weißenkirch than it evokes the lewd and lurid rites of the theologians' fantasies. Bittelmayr's conception of disorder seems to have differed somewhat from that of her interrogators. Where the latter meant an irrevocable breakdown of moral order and decorum, she imagined it as a temporary absence of social propriety which could easily be restored as soon as it was necessary. At this point one glimpses tensions between reforming clerics and ordinary folk about precisely what the bounds of moral behaviour might be.

Bittelmayr's confused attempt on 27 October to make sense of the leading questions posed about the nocturnal congregations of the witch-heretics by her interrogators formed the narrative background to the thirty denunciations made by her on the seven subsequent days of interrogation. Having constructed her own ordinary mental image of a communal feast, Bittelmayr then populated it with the people whom she would have expected or wanted to see there. Her selection of accomplices was in no way arbitrary or malicious. She had performed the same imaginative process previously, both in her initial inconclusive tale of her entry into the sect and in the second accepted story of seduction by the Devil. In the first of these two narratives, the trip to the wedding in Weißenkirch, her travelling companions would appear to have been friends with whom she had often attended public events before they were tried and executed for witchcraft. All five women on the way to the wedding were of the same social milieu at the centre of political life in Eichstätt: Bittelmayr was the wife of the town scribe and a relative of the wife of Johann Christoph Abegg, the Bavarian chancellor;[111] and the Bonschabin, the Richelin, the Apothekerin and the Stricker Bastelin were members of one or other of the senior political families in Eichstätt. It is not clear to which Bonschab the Bonschabin refers.

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[109] StAN, Hexenakten 45 (M. Bittelmayr), 27 October 1626.

[110] Ibid., 27 October 1626.

[111] Ibid., title page and 15 October 1626, and Behringer, *Hexenverfolgung in Bayern*, p. 255. Abegg was the Bavarian chancellor from 1625 to 1644.

Schaut den dollen Bauez Hauffen
Lustig hie beysammen Sauffen
wan ist Sontag in der Schenck
Da sie ohne Sorgen sitzen
Biß der Trunck sie thut erhitzen
Dann so setzets wunder Schwenck
Manchez es mit Andacht meint
Der Bauch schreyt einander weint
Ein Paar Drehet sich beyseit
Dieser liegt in Koth und Speut
Dort Hanß um die Greten freut
Fort wer nicht kan thun Vescheit

Ill. 3. Daniel Hopfer, 'Peasants at a village feast', sixteenth century, woodcut. Germanisches Nationalmuseum, Nuremberg [Inv. Nr. 11372 Kps. 1466]. Reproduced with kind permission.

Anna, Kunigunda (by whom Bittelmayr was certainly denounced) and Barbara Bonschab had been executed before 1626; Ursula Bonschab was executed in 1627.[112] The family was, however, prominent in Eichstätt society. Lorenz Bonschab, for example, had been a *Bürgermeister* (mayor) of Eichstätt on his arrest for witchcraft in 1627.[113] The Richelin, Maria Richel (née Bonschab), was the wife of Bartholomäus Richel, the chancellor of the bishopric until 1623, when she was arrested for witchcraft in 1620.[114] It is also not clear to which of three Apothekerins executed for witchcraft in Eichstätt Bittelmayr had made reference in her narrative. All had been executed before 1626. The most likely candidate would seem to have been the wife of the court butcher.[115] The Stricker Bastelin, also known as the Fischerin, was Walburga Wölch, wife of the *Fronfischer* (fisheries' supervisor), a council position.[116] In the second tale of seduction Bittelmayr prefaced the deception by the Devil (committing fornication with her in the guise of her husband) with a brief history of her sexual encounters. Bittelmayr did not insinuate that the old woman Anna or her husband were culpable in her seduction into the vice of witchcraft. Her relations with them merely served as the narrative device through which she enabled herself to imagine and introduce the actual diabolical seduction. Both figures were, in effect, her equals: Anna was a fellow servant in the old Krämbsin's household and also her bed-partner; Jacob was from the same professional-craft class as her family.

Bittelmayr was not the only suspect who named her closer associates as accomplices and grounded her narrative in real events which were not characterized by conflict. From the lists of accomplices which can be reconstructed for the period from 1617, it is clear that the gender of the witch-suspect under interrogation influenced the gender ratio among those whom they denounced as their fellow witches.[117] The women in question invariably named significantly more women than men. The men also tended to denounce more women as their accomplices. With the exception of Georg Gutmann and an unknown male for whom

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[112] StAN, Hexenakten 48 (K. Bonschab) and BundesA ASt Frankfurt FSg.2/1-F 13 668 (Eichstätt A-K), frames 70–75.

[113] Ibid., frame 73.

[114] Behringer, *Hexenverfolgung in Bayern*, pp. 255–56, and BundesA ASt Frankfurt FSg.2/1-F 13 669 (Eichstätt L-Z), frames 92–93.

[115] StAN, Hexenakten 48 (B. Apotheker).

[116] BundesA ASt Frankfurt FSg.2/1-F 13 669 (Eichstätt L-Z), frames 173 and 188.

[117] Durrant, "Witchcraft, Gender and Society", pp. 319–20.

there are only substantial (rather than complete) data available, however, men identified a much greater proportion of their own sex than were indicted by the witch commissioners; in two cases, those of Peter Porzin and Hans Stigeliz, over 70% of those whom they denounced were male.

On Tuesday 23 May 1628, Hans Stigeliz named just one accomplice, *Bürgermeister* Rehel.[118] The next day he added the brewer Georg Pitelmayr, the *Lebzelter* Hans Danner, *Bürgermeister* Moringer and the town scribe.[119] This must have seemed a frustratingly slow rate of denunciation to the interrogators who had been used to witch-suspects like Georg Gutmann naming a dozen or more accomplices in one session from the early years of this last phase of persecution.[120] The illness which led to the abrupt end of this trial may have been hindering Stigeliz's progress at this point, although no reason for his lack of co-operation is given in the record. It is not possible to state the quality of Stigeliz's relations with his alleged accomplices, but they were at least his social peers, members of politically-active families or skilled professions, and male. He did not look beyond the men of his social milieu for other possible witch-heretics. Only Rehel was later brought before the witch commission; he was executed on 4 December 1628.[121] Pitelmayr, Moringer and the town scribe escaped arrest, but their wives were later suspected or condemned as witches.[122] Hans Danner and his family seem to have remained untouched by the persecutions in Eichstätt.

On Thursday 25 May, the pace of Stigeliz's denunciations quickened significantly and he named a further nineteen people as witches, but the social status of the alleged accomplices was not diminished.[123] He began with Father Reichard, the *Renteiverwalter* (a bursar) and Paul Gabler. It was at this point, on the third day of questioning about his accomplices

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[118] StAN, Hexenakten 45 (H. Stigeliz), 23 May 1628.

[119] Ibid., 24 May 1628.

[120] StAN, Hexenakten 48 (G. Gutmann), 29 January 1618 (a.m.).

[121] StAN, Hexenakten 49 (Selected *relationes*). Three copies of one group of *relationes* are to be found in this fascicle of documents. They include a *relatio* of information abstracted from the trial of Rehel.

[122] There is a denunciatory compiled in respect of Frau Pitelmayr, StAN, Hexenakten 49 (Pitelmayr—denunciations). Documents relating to the interrogation of Eva Susanna Moringer (a *malefacta*, an *inquisition*, a will and the trial transcript) are scattered throughout StAN, Hexenakten 48. The wife of the town scribe was Margretha Bittelmayr. It is not currently possible to state whether Georg Pitelmayr and his wife were related to Jacob and Margretha Bittelmayr.

[123] StAN, Hexenakten 45 (H. Stigeliz), 25 May 1628.

and after identifying eight of them, that he finally named two women, Anna Schrad and the widow of Dr Baumgartner. Stigeliz only named one other female witch on this day, the Kammermeisterin, that is, the wife of the council treasurer or chamberlain. Of the remaining twelve men denounced on the Thursday by Stigeliz, three were clergymen (Muckenthal, Schintelbeck and Sebastian) and four held positions on the town council or were employed by it: *Bürgermeister* Lauterer, the *Oberamtsknecht* (senior council servant who was then Georg Spindler), a servant of the council named Georg and the town steward (Leonhard Pfaler). The others were Balthasarus Richter (possibly a smith), the judge of St. Walburga, the court saddler, Georg Silbereis and the master watchman at the court. Of these nineteen alleged accomplices, only Reichard and Lauterer attracted the direct attention of the authorities, and only because other denunciations were later laid against them.[124] The important point here, however, is that Stigeliz, whose illness was now causing his interrogators grave concern, was continuing to name those who would have been close associates within his social circle. This observation is borne out further by the way in which some of these individuals were described by Stigeliz. He claimed that Balthasarus Richter went to the nocturnal gatherings of the sect with Lauterer and that Leonhard Pfaler attended them with the *Renteiverwalter*;[125] he also claimed to have seen the court saddler there with Georg Silbereis.[126] Stigeliz added a telling detail to his description of this last pair: they drank together at the Spital. Stigeliz had known them socially, offering them the hospitality of his place of work. One is reminded of Margretha Bittelmayr's first attempt to construct a tale of diabolical seduction. In that tale, she too had been drinking with her heretical companions. Sharing drink, as well as food, also occurs in the testimony of Michael Hochenschildt, which I will discuss in the next chapter, when he was describing the quality of his relations with his denouncers to the witch commissioners.

Even on the fourth day of interrogation about his alleged accomplices, the Friday, Stigeliz maintained the same frame of reference for his denunciations: men of or connected with the polity or the clergy in the town of Eichstätt.[127] Twelve, or just over a quarter, of the forty-one

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[124] Cf. StAN, Hexenakten 47 (J. Reichard) and StAN, Hexenakten 49 (C. Lauterer).
[125] StAN, Hexenakten 45 (H. Stigeliz), 25 May 1628.
[126] Ibid., 25 May 1628.
[127] Ibid., 26 May 1628.

denunciations made by Stigeliz on that day were laid against clergymen resident in the town. Most of the other eighteen men listed as witches on the Friday were members of respectable families, although only one, the *Oblaier* (administrator of church gifts), was identified by his position of authority.[128] There were, however, two deviations from the patterns of denunciation found on the previous three days. First, Stigeliz included people from outside of Eichstätt: Dollinger and his wife, who were residents of Kipfenberg, and the innkeeper in Pfünz.[129] Second, the proportion of women among his alleged accomplices increased marginally. The first of these two changes was slight and probably only arose because Stigeliz was casting around for names. The second is more interesting. The statistical data could be used to suggest that, under increased pressure to complete this section of the interrogation in time for the dying Stigeliz to receive due punishment, he was reverting to a popular stereotype of a witch. Such a reading is not, however, borne out by the other details given for the eleven women denounced during this session. Five women were identified only by the names of their husbands and Walburga Aunbockh's spouse, the tanner Hans, was included as part of Stigeliz's description of her. Traditionally, tanners, because of the materials and smell associated with their occupation, were considered less honourable than their peers (although the job itself was highly skilled) and the status of Dollinger's wife is not known. The remaining four of these women had, however, married into households of the respectable 'middling sort'. One was a widow and therefore the only woman of this group to possess another characteristic of the stereotypical witch in addition to her sex; none of the others were, for example, also described as 'old'.

The five other women were described by their own or their husband's occupations: the Bürgerknechtin (possibly the wife of Georg who had been denounced on the Thursday), the Kürschnerin (furrier's wife), the Old Hofschneiderin (court tailor's wife), the Griesbaderin (owner of or employee at the Griesbad in Eichstätt) and the 'Löschen Böckhin' (the wife of a baker). These names were derived from crafts or professions which were generally regarded as respectable, although bathhouse owners and employees sometimes found themselves vulnerable to legal

[128] Stigeliz also gave the *Oblaier*'s previous public position, that of *Hausmeister* (it is not clear what responsibilities the *Hausmeister* held in Eichstätt), ibid., 26 May 1628.
[129] Ibid., 26 May 1628.

and social censure in moral panics.[130] Only one of these five alleged accomplices was described as 'old', although this might have been more to distinguish her from the wife of the present court tailor than a description of her age. It would seem therefore that Stigeliz denounced female witches on the same basis as he denounced male ones. For the most part, they were associated with men of his social milieu and were consequently individuals whom he was most likely to remember under extreme psychological and physical pressure, compounded in this particular case by the pain of a terminal illness. As this pressure increased, Stigeliz became less restrained in making his denunciations and as he did so a greater proportion of women were included among the alleged accomplices.

The patterns of denunciation discerned in Stigeliz's case can be identified in much longer lists of accomplices, like that provided by Valtin Lanng who named over 200 members of the witch sect. When he first began naming accomplices on the afternoon of 9 May 1618, he focused on his neighbours in the centre of the town of Eichstätt where the more affluent inhabitants lived. Of the first twenty-three accomplices, three lived near ecclesiastical buildings in this part of the town, three resided in Pfalergasse and two lived in Schlaggasse, streets close to the market-place. A further three lived in the Western Quarter, a short walk from the market square, and one woman lived in the area by the Spitalbrücke, again not far from the centre of the town. Only two of these first accomplices cannot be placed definitely in this area, the Eichbaderin and a woman whose name cannot be read.[131] Two and a half months later Lanng was still naming accomplices and the patterns remain identifiable. Thus, when he was coming towards the end of the penultimate session of interrogation about his accomplices on the morning of 23 August 1618, one finds him citing three widows, followed by the daughter of the last of these, and then another widow.[132] At the end of his last session denouncing his fellow witches, Lanng named the Old Schmidin by the Buchtaltor, then her daughter and a daughter-in-

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[130] On the morally ambiguous status of bathhouses, see Franz Irsigler and Arnold Lassotta, *Bettler und Gaukler, Dirnen und Henker. Außenseiter in einer mittelalterlichen Stadt* (8th ed., Munich: Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag, 1998), pp. 97–108, and Mary Lindemann, *Medicine and Society in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 217–19.

[131] StAN, Hexenakten 48 (V. Lanng), 9 May 1618 (p.m.). The Eichbaderin had been 'deported' according to Lanng's testimony, but the reason for this is not given.

[132] Ibid., 23 August 1618 (a.m.).

law, followed by the *Schachtelmacher* (a maker of shafts for weapons) and his wife, then the carter Georg's wife (who lived in Buchtal, the same quarter of the town as the Old Schmidin and her daughter), followed by another carter's wife who lived by the Blatterhaus, as did the penultimate accomplice, the wife of the *Gemeindestadtforster* (communal town forester).[133] In this part of his list familial, occupational and residential patterns of association were mixed.

As in the lists of accomplices provided by Stigeliz, the patterns of association which informed Lanng's denunciations were a product of the suspect's knowledge rather than of prompting by the interrogators. Lanng was not encouraged to name people street-by-street as the Bamberg interrogators were to force Johannes Junius.[134] These personal associations did not reflect one's negative relationships with individuals who possessed some or all of the characteristics of the stereotypical witch. Lanng did not, for example, name a succession of widows until two and a half months after he had begun listing his accomplices, nor did he begin with possible suspects from the poorer suburbs of Eichstätt, such as the Buchtal and the area around the Blatterhaus. Instead, these lists reveal a suspect's positive friendly, political or professional ties with his or her neighbours and, less often, family. Only when these associations were nearly exhausted did the defendant search further afield, if they did not stop completely at this point. Even then, however, the names of the accomplices were linked by associations based on marital status, familial connection, neighbourhood and profession, rather than being either overtly malicious or entirely random.

I have deliberately chosen the cases of two male witches to illustrate the point that suspects did not denounce as their accomplices people who had a reputation as witches or cunning folk or who fitted a preconceived cultural stereotype, even archetype, of a witch. Historians are used to conceiving of the witch as a woman, believing that this connection was inherent in a Continental-wide popular view of the witch-figure, and have tended to regard the minority of male witches, at least when they appear in the central regions of Europe, as an aberration to be explained away by showing that they were related to known witches

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[133] Ibid., 29 August 1618 (p.m.).

[134] When the Eichstätt interrogators did ask about accomplices from specific locations, the scribe seems to have included the additional question in his transcript, for example, when Barbara Haubner was asked about witches in the town of Eichstätt, StAN, Hexenakten 48 (B. Haubner), 30 January 1618 (p.m.).

or by suggesting that they were the victims of some local power struggle. Both Hans Stigeliz and Valtin Lanng were, however, caught up in the persecutions in Eichstätt in the same way as Margretha Bittelmayr and their female neighbours. They had not been formally accused of witchcraft by their alleged victims; denunciations had accumulated against them and the witch commissioners decided to act on this evidence. Lanng and Stigeliz were then forced to name names. If they had been drawing on historically pervasive popular images of the witch one would expect the gender element of the witch-figure to be prominent, alongside old age, penury, widowhood and ugliness, in the attributes of the accomplices whom they denounced. Stigeliz did not, however, pick on vulnerable marginal figures when listing his accomplices, and those in Lanng's list come towards its end. They looked instead to their networks of relatives, colleagues and other close associates for potential suspects. They did so because the questions posed by the interrogators included references to weddings, feasting, dancing, baptism and regular church attendance. The diabolical elements aside, the witch-defendants were being asked to conceive of their crime in terms of activities which were communal and therefore comprehensible to them. No wonder many witch-suspects located the witches' sabbaths at weddings or other places where people might gather such as the shooting grounds. No wonder too that they peopled that other-world with their neighbours in this.

The social status of the witch

The analysis of the denunciations made by the Eichstätt witches also highlights a secondary effect of the naming process. The prevalence of citizens and their household members among the alleged witches cast suspicion on a particular class of people in the capital. It has been possible to identify, for the period 1618–31, the occupations or council positions of 100 of the urban suspects or their close relatives (husbands, fathers or fathers-in-law). As Appendix 2 shows, the households of bakers were worst affected by the persecution. There were, however, 139 bakers named in the baptismal, marriage and death registers for the town of Eichstätt between 1589 and 1618. As a craft practised by a large number of men in a small town, one might expect their households to have produced an equally significant number of witches during a persecution. The same may be observed of the brewers, butchers, innkeepers, cobblers, smiths and tailors, all of which were among the

larger occupational groupings in the town. Together these craftsmen dominated local secular politics. Many of the smaller occupational groups affected by the persecution were also of relatively high status and had similar access to authority in the capital: traders, apothecaries, carters, fishermen, millers and so on.

The most interesting statistic in this appendix, however, is that for the clothworkers. Although this was the largest professional grouping in the town, to which one should also add weavers and dyers (at least another sixty-one men in addition to the 183 noted in the appendix), only one clothworking household was affected by the witch trials.[135] These men were not prominent among the secular political elite of the town, nor were the bathhouse owners (of whom there were twenty-nine in the period up to 1618) or the day-labourers (twenty-eight described as such between 1589 and 1618), none of whose households seem to have provided a witch-suspect.[136] Other less honourable professionals were also excluded, among them the executioners and the soldiers at the bishop's residence.[137] The dynamics of interrogation meant that many lower-class occupations were not represented among the witch-suspects.

There are also higher-status crafts missing from the data. Apart from the clergy (with the exception of Johann Reichard), no witches were members of households headed by, for example, builders, glassmakers, goldsmiths, potters, hunters, musicians, carpenters or stonemasons.[138] This is not to say, however, that their relatives were not arrested as witches. Maria Mayr, for example, was the daughter of the glassmaker

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[135] Buchner recorded fourteen dyers, sixteen flax-weavers, a finecloth-weaver, a silk-weaver, a knitter and twenty-nine weavers, Buchner, "Eichstätter Familienbuch", pp. 11, 18, 23, 26, 28 and 30. One could also add a number of craftsmen, apart from the tailors, who made the resulting cloth into other products, for example, the *Gollermacher* (makers of collars and similar items).

[136] Ibid., pp. 7 and 28.

[137] Buchner recorded nine executioners and their assistants and twenty-five soldiers in his researches, ibid., pp. 17, 20, 22 and 27. On the executioner and his dishonour, for example, see Irsigler and Lassotta, *Bettler und Gaukler*, pp. 228–82, and Richard J. Evans, *Rituals of Retribution: Capital Punishment in Germany, 1600–1987* (London: Penguin Books, 1997), pp. 56–64. For a fictional account of the poor behaviour of early modern soldiers, see Hans Jacob Christoffel von Grimmelshausen, *Der abenteuerliche Simplicissimus Teutsch* (1668; repr. Stuttgart: Philipp Reclam, 1996).

[138] Buchner recorded thirteen glassmakers, thirteen goldsmiths, twenty-two potters, seventeen hunters, thirty-two musicians, thirty-two carpenters and thirty-four stonemasons or related craftsmen, Buchner, "Eichstätter Familienbuch", pp. 13–14, 16, 20–1, 25 and 27–8. None of these seems therefore to have been a minor profession in the town of Eichstätt.

Thoma Nagelmayr.[139] It seems, however, that the relationships between these craft households and those of bakers, for example, were not sufficiently strengthened through marriage and godparentage to provide suitable candidates as witch-suspects. Given that there were very few accusations from self-identified victims of witchcraft and that the interrogations were carried out by ecclesiastics who had little or nothing to do with their secular peers in other contexts (which rules out faction as an explanation for the omission of certain crafts), the concentration on a few professions would seem to have resulted solely from the naming process imposed on the suspect during her interrogation.

Conclusion

The first witch-suspects to be arrested in the final phase of persecution from 1617 were women. It is not now possible to suggest how they came to be suspected of witchcraft, but these early suspects named close associates among their accomplices. It seems that because female witch-suspects maintained more intimate relationships with their female neighbours, they denounced more women than men as fellow heretics. It also seems to be the case that the persecution from 1617 affected mainly craft or professional households because of the same naming process. Those witch-defendants who did include a greater proportion of women than men among their accomplices may have instinctively equated witchcraft with women, but they still chose these individuals from their social circles. Of the 163 identifiable accomplices denounced by the cobbler Valtin Lanng (he named 237 in total), most of the 140 women were drawn from craft households.[140]

If the trials during Westerstetten's reign began among women and escalated because women tended to denounce women, the failure of his witch commissioners to follow the logic of their own procedures exaggerated the proportion of women among those arrested for the crime of witchcraft. Denunciations sufficient in number to lead to the arrest of a woman were laid against certain men, notably clergymen, but were not acted upon. It is likely that the interrogators could not easily imagine men as witches. They were also not abstract, faceless embodiments of faith. They created friendships based on personality which

[139] StAN, Hexenakten 48 (M. Mayr—*inquisition*), Article 1.
[140] Ibid., (V. Lanng).

transcended their vocational duties and they must therefore have been sufficiently intimate with their peers to know that they could not have been witches, and that a witch could be lying when she denounced them. Whilst these friendships cannot be reconstructed for the clergy in Eichstätt, their lay contemporaries left commentaries on their relationships, including friendships, with their neighbours in their answers to the interrogators' questions. These commentaries are the subject of the following chapter.

PART II

CHAPTER THREE

FRIENDS AND ENEMIES

Under the intense pressure of persistent questioning, threats and torture, the witch-defendants in Eichstätt tended to denounce as their accomplices individuals with whom they shared a range of significant and generally positive relationships. Witnesses too almost always described their relationships with the witch-suspects in ambiguous rather than acrimonious terms. They failed to cite witchcraft, precipitated by social conflict, as the cause of the misfortune which overtook them or the alleged victims on whose behalf they were called to testify. An endemic fear of the witch-figure or her 'deadly words' did not therefore circumscribe the testimonies of the Eichstätt suspects and witnesses.[1] In the identification of accomplices and victims, the suspects inverted their proper relations with neighbours and kin, and recycled both traumatic episodes of illness, death and impoverishment which had touched their own family or friends and, less often, local gossip in which they were not always directly implicated.

In this and the following three chapters, I will look more closely at the various relationships between the three principal groups of individuals found in the confession narratives and witness depositions: the witch-suspects; the alleged accomplices; and the witnesses called to appear before the witch commission. The 'emotion' and 'interest' invested by the inhabitants of Eichstätt in the familial and social relationships which bound them together will be the primary focus of these chapters. What emerges from such an examination is a view of early modern communities which is more optimistic about the state of everyday familial, social and gender relations within them than the historiography of either witchcraft or gender currently permits. I do not aim to undermine research which has confirmed how hard life was for ordinary folk in early modern Europe, especially in the late sixteenth

[1] On the fear of 'deadly words' in recent times, see Jeanne Favret-Saada, *Deadly Words: Witchcraft in the Bocage*, trans. by Catherine Cullen (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980). It is not a concept which can be demonstrated to have existed at a local level in early modern Eichstätt, primarily because the intense fieldwork undertaken by Favret-Saada cannot be replicated in historical studies.

and early seventeenth centuries, or how vulnerable women could be both within the household and before the law.[2] Instead, I will argue that there is a story of communal and social life which complements the prevalent view of early modern community, gained from a limited range of sources, as rigidly hierarchical, socially fractured and, perhaps, in crisis. The ordinary life which emerges from the Eichstätt trial transcripts transcended the prescriptions of patriarchy and normative behaviour reinforced in religious and social ritual. It is a part of the early modern experience which is usually excluded from the adversarial legal narratives of more conventional court cases because the social cohesion of which it speaks did not suit the purposes of plaintiffs or the coherent story required to legitimate a guilty verdict and, often, the sentence of death. The story of this ordinary life privileges intimate relationships between individuals and groups within the early modern community as they sought to deal with daily contingencies by forming friendships and engaging with each other positively as neighbours. The basic premises of my discussion here are that personality overrode prescription in the choice of one's closest associates, and that religious tension, agrarian crisis and warfare were as likely to promote solidarity as provoke disharmony in well-established, close-knit communities. It is in these less frequently articulated bonds that one can locate a sense of everyday early modern sociality.

Methodology

Locating sociality in witchcraft confession narratives requires a different methodology to those adopted in the reading of witchcraft accusation narratives and pamphlets. Historians of witchcraft episodes tend to focus on these sources because they are easier to handle. Accusation narratives seem to reflect the circumstances of individual cases as they were perceived by the narrator (often the victim of witchcraft); and

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[2] The Little Ice Age clearly caused many difficulties for early modern Europeans, including perhaps the so-called General Crisis, on which see the essays in Trevor Aston (ed.), *Crisis in Europe 1560–1660: Essays from* Past and Present *1952–1962* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1965), and Geoffrey Parker and L.M. Smith (eds.), *The General Crisis of the Seventeenth Century* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1978). The vulnerability of women in these contexts has been widely documented, but see, for example, Ulinka Rublack, *The Crimes of Women in Early Modern Germany* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1999), and Garthine Walker, *Crime, Gender and Social Order in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

the large historiography of early modern literature and its authors, printers and audiences means that pamphlets can readily be placed in wider cultural contexts. Confession narratives, on the other hand, are more difficult to analyse because they were composed of a mixture of voices—the accusers', the suspects', the witnesses', the interrogators', and the scribes'—manipulated to cast the unwilling and usually innocent suspect in the role of witch. Disentangling who said what and analysing what their words might mean at any level is a difficult process. It is, however, one that ought to be attempted and which brings rich rewards when it is. Lyndal Roper's psychoanalytical approach to the case of Regina Bartholome, for example, highlights the depth of detail contained in these confession narratives.[3] I am not, however, concerned with the psychic worlds of individual witches in this book. I am interested in their social and cultural worlds, and I have therefore adopted an historical-anthropological method of reading these types of document.

In the introduction to *Interest and Emotion* (1984), a collection of papers in which social historians and social anthropologists discussed the various qualitative approaches to the study of kinship and family, David Sabean and Hans Medick suggested that a dialogue between these scholars could take the examination of kinship beyond the sharp dichotomy which had opposed the 'objective, material, structural or institutional' to the 'subjective, cultural, symbolic or emotional'.[4] Sabean and Medick focused their criticisms on Peter Laslett's structuralist study of the family in the past.[5] The potential of the Sabean-Medick approach as a critique of the functionalist interpretation of witchcraft accusations proposed by Alan Macfarlane and developed by others is, however, equally clear. Neither Laslett's nor Macfarlane's accounts of the past are nuanced enough to incorporate the subjective experience of the individual into the picture. In both accounts, structures, whether they be the family or society as a whole, are represented as the agents in the course of history and in so far as they have been perceived to act these structures have been reified by the historians concerned. One could extend this

[3] Roper, "Oedipus and the Devil".

[4] Hans Medick and David Warren Sabean, "Introduction" in id. (eds.), *Interest and Emotion: Essays on the Study of Family and Kinship* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), pp. 1–8 (p. 2).

[5] Id., "Interest and Emotion in Family and Kinship Studies: A Critique of Social History and Anthropology", in id., *Interest and Emotion*, pp. 9–27 (p. 9).

criticism to women's historians who insist on promoting patriarchy as a category of analysis. They too reify a structure, patriarchy, and exclude the agency of the subjective individual from history.[6]

If *Interest and Emotion* was an attempt to close the gap in theory between anthropologists and historians, Sabean's collection of case studies, *Power in the Blood* (1994), is an example of the resulting historical-anthropological approach in practice. Whilst Sabean has been critical of structuralist and functionalist tendencies to reify family or society, he has been careful not to swing to the other extreme where the anthropologist Marilyn Strathern has suggested that she can 'imagine people having no society'.[7] He has maintained, with Hans Medick, that structures are important, that whilst property, for example, should not be reified, it should instead be understood as a relationship structured by *and* structuring emotions and needs.[8] Property then is regarded by Sabean as a relational idiom, a part of the grammar of the metaphorical structure of the text, through which both emotion (the subjective experience) and interest (the objective experience) in family life were expressed and mediated. The advantage of identifying relational idioms in early modern texts is their interpretational flexibility. Macfarlane seems to imply that any individual accuser of witches responded to deep structural changes imposed by society on the way she related to her neighbours by plumping for one of only two dichotomous options: to be old-fashioned and neighbourly or modern and individualistic. The use of relational idioms allows one to move beyond the limited options identified in this approach and consider the circumstances of the individual case.

Food is another example of a relational idiom identified by Sabean in his studies both of kinship in general and the trial of the young witch Anna Catharina in particular. He borrowed this idiom from Esther Goody and, as I will show, it also permeates the confession narratives constructed by the Eichstätt witch-suspects.[9] The exchange and sharing of food are essential to human society regardless of time or place;

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[6] This is partly the argument of Joan Wallach Scott in her *Gender and the Politics of History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988).

[7] Marilyn Strathern, *The Gender of the Gift: Problems with Women and Problems with Society in Melanesia* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1990), p. 3.

[8] Medick and Sabean, "Introduction" in *Interest and Emotion*, p. 4.

[9] Esther Goody, *Contexts of Kinship: An Essay in the Family Sociology of the Gonja of Northern Ghana* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1973).

without them we cannot be assured of an adequate supply of the elements vital to our continued healthy existence. Human relationships are structured by this shared need and desire for enough food, but the interests and emotions invested in the production of food also create relationships of interdependence, mutual interest or tension which vary according to the prevailing cultural and social as well as economic and political conditions. It is therefore possible to take such idioms as food, examine how and in what contexts individuals spoke about them and reconstruct the specific and culturally-bound relationships which are expressed through them.

The identification of relational idioms is a principal method by which I intend to read and interpret the relationships which form the basis of the defendants' confession narratives. As I will show in this chapter, however, the witch-suspects' assessments of their neighbourly relations were not always expressed obliquely, and perhaps unconsciously, through this means. The judicial process adopted in Eichstätt afforded the defendants an opportunity to comment explicitly on the nature of their relationships with their denouncers and those whom they went on to denounce as accomplices. Only after I have looked at these statements of the quality of personal relations will I consider, in the following chapters, the relational idioms (food, sex and health) which can be identified in the confession narratives.

The witch and her denouncers

In a few of the Eichstätt interrogations the witch-suspect was given the opportunity to comment on her relationships with her denouncers as they were read out to her, and every defendant was asked whether she had denounced any of her accomplices out of enmity. In the trials of 1617 to 1619 the commissioners also asked some suspects to confirm a denunciation they had made previously in order to determine whether it was genuine or had some malicious origin. This happened most frequently in respect of alleged accomplices who were either already in custody or who were now under a strong suspicion of witchcraft, or where the defendant had not been certain if she had in fact seen a particular individual at the nocturnal gatherings. Such questions did not form part of the standard interrogatory, but their use seems to reveal a general and consistent concern on the part of the judges that they would not allow the witch-suspects, whom they perceived as

inherently malicious, to derail the persecution from its primary purpose: the spiritual cleansing of the insidious, secretive, heretical witch sect from the principality. They appear to have been anxious to prevent individuals from abusing the trial process to settle their petty temporal scores and implicate innocent people in their crimes. It is this apparent, often unwitting, manipulation of the judicial machinery by the accusers of witches which has led witchcraft historians working within the framework of social conflict theories to characterize the contemporary Western world as socially dysfunctional. It seems to make sense therefore to begin the investigation into the witch-suspects' relationships with their neighbours by looking at both their assessments of those relationships given in answer to the interrogators' questions about the denouncers and victims, and their verbal reactions to the denunciations laid against them during direct confrontations with other witch-suspects in which they reveal something of the quality of their relationships with those individuals.

On his first day before the witch commissioners (Tuesday 14 March 1628), after the customary questions about his personal life, Michael Hochenschildt was asked why he thought that he had been brought to the town hall. Like almost every other witch-suspect for whom the interrogation transcripts are extant, he replied that he did not know, 'it is a wonder to him, as he is now astonished by it'.[10] His interrogators then read out to him the list of convicted witches who had testified against him. Hochenschildt's response to the implied question about his standing with each of his accusers (a question which was not transcribed in this deposition) was fuller than that recorded for other Eichstätt witches. He claimed the following about his denouncers: that he had no knowledge about the Schweizer Casparin (Barbara Rabel), Candler Bartlin or the Große Beckin; that he had always held Hans Baur for his good neighbour ('alzeit für sein guetten Nachbarn') with whom he ate and drank; that he knew Schöttnerin, Amerserin and Mosin, but nothing evil about them; that there was no reason why he should be angry with Thoma Trometerin, Anna Thiermayr and Anna Erb; that one time he had not been at peace with the Gelbschusterin (Maria Lang), 'but it was no mortal enmity';[11] that he had caroused with the Langschneider

[10] StAN, Hexenakten 45 (M. Hochenschildt), 14 March 1628.

[11] 'so seÿ es doch khein Todt feindtschafft gewesen', ibid., 14 March 1628. That the Gelbschusterin, executed on 6 March 1627, was Maria Lang is confirmed in in

(Lorenz Brandt) several times, but did not keep company with him other than for this; that Haimen Enderlin was his neighbour; that Michael Rottinger was well known to him, but they did nothing together; that he could not report anything about Michael Girtenstihl; and that he could not say anything about the imprisoned Schmidt Appel because they also did not do anything together.[12] Seventeen months earlier, in contrast, the commissioners' scribe had merely abridged Margretha Bittelmayr's commentary on her twenty-one denouncers in just five inconclusive points.[13]

A further set of detailed responses to a list of denouncers comes from a fragment of the transcript of the interrogation of Ursula Funk who was executed with Bittelmayr and two others on 26 November 1626.[14] Towards the beginning of this fragment the interrogators asked Funk about five of her denouncers, all of whom had made their accusations as they stood before the interrogators as suspects. She was first asked 'What does she answer to the accusation made by [Eva Susanna] Moringer?' to which she replied 'ah my dear lords, one can say what one wants, but she could not say anything'.[15] In respect of the remaining four of these accusers the commissioners asked the same question, 'Whether she knows [name]?'; each time Funk replied 'Yes', but that she knew nothing of them, meaning about their witchcraft activities.[16] This is probably the pattern of interrogation adopted in the trials of Hochenschildt and Bittelmayr, but which, for whatever reason, the scribe had decided then to omit or summarise. At this point it was no doubt apparent to the interrogators that Funk was not going to implicate herself in the heresy by confirming the confessions of her denouncers. They therefore cut this line of questioning short concluding it with the additional question: 'And whether she believes that still other persons

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DiöAE, "Urfehdebuch", ff. 231r–v, although she is also given the surname Seng in BundesA ASt Frankfurt, FSg.2/1–F 13 669 Eichstätt L-Z, frame 154 (Seng). She was almost certainly the wife of Valtin Lanng, executed on 15 September 1618, DiöAE, "Urfehdebuch", ff. 165r–v and 168r–v, although he did not give his wife's name during his interrogation, StAN, Hexenakten 48 (V. Lanng).

[12] Ibid., 14 March 1628.

[13] StAN, Hexenakten 45 (M. Bittelmayr), 15 October 1626 (a.m.).

[14] DiöAE, "Urfehdebuch", ff. 228v–229v. The date of Bittelmayr's execution is known from the transcript of her interrogation, but her case is not noted in the "Urfehdebuch", StAN, Hexenakten 45 (M. Bittelmayr), cover.

[15] StAN, Hexenakten 48 (U. Funk), f. 2r.

[16] Ibid., f. 2r.

denounced her?'. Funk stated 'Yes, but it was unjust to her . . . she knows well that she is pious . . .'.[17]

The process of reading out the lists of denunciations to the witch-suspects seems to have been a development of the act of confronting her physically with those among her accusers who were still languishing in prison. There is one document of 1626 which gives a full summary of the confrontations between Lorenz Bonschab and two of his denouncers which must have formed part of a larger, lost, file on him.[18] It seems that by 1626 confrontations were being used in cases where the suspect had maintained his innocence for some time or fresh evidence from recently-interrogated suspects had come to light. Bonschab had been arrested on 13 July 1626, but Sabrina Pföringer and Anna Häckhel were not interrogated in his presence until 1 and 2 October 1626 respectively. Very occasionally other later defendants were brought face-to-face with their accusers. Hochenschildt, for example, was confronted by Michael Girtenstihl, in this case during the second session of interrogation.[19]

Most of the interrogations in which direct confrontations occurred survive, however, from the period 1617 to 1619 and in these cases they were routinely conducted towards the beginning of the trial. Georg and Enders Gutmann, for example, were confronted with their accusers during their first sessions of interrogation (13 and 14 December 1617, respectively).[20] The procedure may itself have been a legacy of the earlier witch trials of 1590 and 1603, before the witch commission had been instituted, although it is not now possible to reconstruct the interrogation processes used in those years. When and why there was an evolution in interrogatory practice in Eichstätt, from personal confrontations with denouncers in 1617 to the reading of lists of their names in 1626, the year in which Bittelmayr and Funk, as well as Bonschab, were arrested, are, unfortunately, also difficult questions to answer. An analysis of this change is made more difficult by the existence of cases like that of Eva Susanna Moringer in which she was not told that others had accused her of witchcraft. Instead, she was asked why she was commonly suspected of this crime, a question which had no basis in

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[17] Ibid., f. 2r.
[18] StAN, Hexenakten 49 (L. Bonschab—confrontations).
[19] StAN, Hexenakten 45 (M. Hochenschildt), 15 March 1628.
[20] StAN, Hexenakten 48 (G. Gutmann), 13 December 1617, and (E. Gutmann), 14 December 1617 (a.m.).

fact. Moringer of course denied that she was a witch.[21] Similar inaccurate accusations of a common suspicion are found in earlier trials. In 1617, Wappel Weber had observed that she 'thought she had been accused by the imprisoned women of Pietenfeld',[22] but the interrogators glossed over her correct assessment of her predicament by asking 'why she was commonly held in evil suspicion on account of witchcraft?', a question which in no way reflected the reality of the few denunciations laid against her.[23] She was, however, also confronted with two of these denouncers.

Asking questions about a general outcry against an individual suspect seems, from 1619 onwards, to have replaced questions about specific denouncers, with the exception of the cases discussed above. On only one occasion did such questions elicit a response more detailed than a mere denial of the implied charge. In 1620, the following exchange took place between Anna Ruhr, wife of the court cobbler, and her interrogators:

> Q. Why had she been led there?
> A. She does not know the reason.
> Q. For what reasons was she notorious in the whole town on account of witchcraft?
> A. The Kürschnerin in Pfalergasse, out of great jealousy, had cried out throughout the whole town that she, her husband and her daughter were witches, but she was completely innocent…
> Q. In this regard, it was held up to her that she had been denounced by diverse of the executed. One would hope that she would give God the honour to step away from her heavy sins and make a beginning about her seduction.
> A. As before, she is innocent of witchcraft.…[24]

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[21] Before she gave in to torture during the first session of interrogation, Moringer five times denied being a witch, knowing the Devil or having knowledge of witchcraft, StAN, Hexenakten 48 (E.S. Moringer), 14 February 1619 (a.m.). The confrontation with other witch-suspects or a list of denunciations should normally have happened during this same session.

[22] StAN, Hexenakten 48, (W. Weber), 12 December 1617.

[23] Ibid., 12 December 1617.

[24] StAN, Hexenakten 49 (A. Ruhr), 7 April 1620. Neither the Kürschnerin nor any other individual had formally made an accusation of this sort against Ruhr. What the interrogators wanted from Ruhr was, as the last question quoted makes clear, a confession that she belonged to the witch sect. That the Kürschnerin may have put the rumour about is probably true—there would have been no other reason for Ruhr to mention it—but in the context of this particular trial and the persecution in general it was of little judicial consequence, and the commissioners failed to pursue it.

Personal confrontations produced more or less the same response from the denounced suspect as confronting her with the names of her accusers or asking her why she now found herself before the witch commission: she proclaimed her innocence or her piety and sometimes that her neighbours did her an injustice. The dramatic tension inherent in the confrontation between two witch-suspects, who would always have known each other well, is, however, occasionally palpable on reading the words of the exchange. On 20 January 1618, Enders Gutmann of Pietenfeld was brought into the presence of Barbara Haubner, the midwife of Adelschlag, who was then under interrogation by the witch commission. He stated that 'she was the same type of person as he was, he would die of it'.[25] He must have already made this claim during his own incarceration for witchcraft, although it is not clear whether Barbara Haubner appears in his testimony. She was certainly not named in his tales of seduction, sacrilege of the host and malevolence. She may have been known as Seng Warbel, the only person from Adelschlag cited in Gutmann's list of accomplices, or he may have denounced Haubner to other individuals who seem to have been sent to interview suspects in custody on an informal basis.[26] At least one of Gutmann's spiritual confessions, for example, was reported to the witch commissioners.[27] Haubner replied to Gutmann's accusation by asking 'whether he would wash his hands in her blood…'.[28] One should contrast this firm response aimed directly at the denouncer with Haubner's confused reaction to the confrontation immediately prior to this one. Wappel Weber stated that the defendant 'was as much a witch as she was, and she had seen her now and then at diabolical gatherings on the Wascheggerten and Linsenwiesen'.[29] Temporarily discomfited by this accusation, Haubner began to narrate a tale for the interrogators: once, the Devil had appeared to her in the wood as a squire in

[25] StAN, Hexenakten 48 (B. Haubner), 20 January 1618 (a.m.).

[26] The omission of Haubner's name from the accomplices listed by Enders Gutmann, StAN, Hexenakten 48 (E. Gutmann), 13 January 1618 (a.m.), is the only instance in which I have not been able to trace denunciations through the interrogation transcripts. Possibly this situation occurred because the protocols of the trial process were only just being put into practice.

[27] Father Michael reported that Gutmann had asked him 'whether a witch could also be blessed, otherwise he showed himself in many conversations to be inconstant', StAN, Hexenakten 48 (E. Gutmann), 14 December 1617 (a.m.).

[28] StAN, Hexenakten 48 (B. Haubner), 20 January 1618 (a.m.).

[29] Ibid., 20 January 1618 (a.m.).

the form of Fabian Schreiner.[30] Clearly this was the introduction to a story of diabolical seduction, but she seems to have thought better of it because the scribe recorded that she did not want to confess any more, and Gutmann was then brought in.

Only in two other cases of the fifteen in which confrontations are recorded did a witch-suspect deviate from the conventional succinct response that she knew nothing of her accuser's nefarious activities and that she herself was not such a person. When confronted by Anna Romen, Barbara Ehrenfrid stated that she would tell the truth.[31] When Romen was taken back into custody, however, Ehrenfrid refused to say any more.[32] It is difficult to know now what she hoped to gain by adopting this strategy. Perhaps she was trying to negotiate the fine line between maintaining her innocence and mitigating the pressures of torture. The truth was, of course, that she was innocent of the crime of witchcraft, but she must have been aware that stating that fact only led to further torture; offering to tell the truth temporarily stopped torture because the interrogators assumed that she was about to confess that she was a witch. Ultimately, this obfuscatory strategy failed, Ehrenfrid confessed and was executed on 15 February 1620.[33]

Faced with Anna Beck on the morning of 23 March 1618, Margretha Geiger, the wife of the court carter, gave a different response. She told her interrogators that this suspect had denounced her 'out of enmity' because her husband held Beck in suspicion.[34] Beck replied that she did not want to do her, 'mein liebes Margrettlin' ('my dear Margrettlin'), an injustice, but she had seen her several times and she was the same kind of person as herself.[35] Beck was followed into the interrogation chamber by Judith Obermayr. Again Geiger claimed that she was being denounced out of enmity, this time without specifying the reason, adding 'and she was innocent of this vice, she was a damned whore, that she…could testify this against her'.[36] Obermayr did not debate the point with Geiger, but was replaced by Anna Harding. Like the

[30] Ibid., 20 January 1618 (a.m.).
[31] StAN, Hexenakten 48 (B. Ehrenfrid), 16 November 1619 (p.m.).
[32] Except to reiterate that she 'was completely innocent. Jesus in heaven was God, her treasure. She knows nothing to say. She was a poor sinner, but of witchcraft she knows nothing, on her soul's salvation,…', ibid., 16 November 1619 (p.m.).
[33] DiöAE, "Urfehdebuch", ff. 178v–179r.
[34] StAN, Hexenakten 48 (M. Geiger), 23 March 1618 (a.m.).
[35] Ibid., 23 March 1618 (a.m.).
[36] Ibid., 23 March 1618 (a.m.).

previous denouncers Harding recited the denunciatory formula—'she said to her under oath that she will die of it that she saw her on the Linsenwiesen'[37]—but on this occasion Geiger merely stated that 'she was not such a person'.[38]

There is a tension in these exchanges in the interrogation chamber between the denouncers' claims that Margretha Geiger, for example, was the same type of person as themselves (or that they had seen her at some gathering) and the suspect's counterclaims that she was not. In neither part of the exchange was being a witch mentioned explicitly. Within the community, Geiger (a court carter's wife) *was* the same type of woman as Anna Beck (a baker's wife) and Judith Obermayr (a ropemaker's wife), that is, a woman of relative status, someone whom the denouncers would certainly have seen at communal gatherings and whom they may well have numbered among their friends and family. The denouncers were not lying when they recited the ambiguous formula of the confrontation, and perhaps they felt that their guilty consciences were somehow assuaged by stating this fact rather than making a more direct accusation of witchcraft. It is noteworthy in this respect that Harding, a woman associated with cunning practices and abortion, did not state the social untruth that Geiger was the same person as she was. Geiger, on the other hand, was trying to maintain her innocence at this point in her interrogation and understood clearly the implications of her accusers' words. She too was telling the truth when she denied being one of them, that is, a witch.

Little can be inferred about the quality of the relationships between Barbara Ehrenfrid and Anna Romen or between Margretha Geiger and both Anna Harding and Judith Obermayr from the brief exchanges described above. As with the relationships between witch-suspects in most of the other confrontations transcribed in the trial documentation where the defendant merely denied their participation in any witchcraft activity, there is not much additional information from which to reconstruct the ties which bound these women to each other. The responses given by Margretha Bittelmayr and Ursula Funk in answer to questions about their denouncers are also neutral in this respect. It is, however, possible to analyse the quality of the relationships between Barbara Haubner and the two suspects with whom she was confronted,

[37] Ibid., 23 March 1618 (a.m.).
[38] Ibid., 23 March 1618 (a.m.).

Michael Hochenschildt and his denouncers, and Margretha Geiger and Anna Beck.

Barbara Haubner and her denouncers

Under interrogation, especially during the early years of the third phase of the Eichstätt persecutions, the witch-suspect would frequently name one accomplice and follow it up immediately with a relative, usually a daughter. Thus Enders Gutmann named Barbara Khager and then her son Michael, the Schieber Warbel and her daughter Wappel, and the Old Schmidin of Buxheim and her daughter also called Wappel.[39] Enders was encouraged in this direction. When it came to identifying his accomplices, the witch commissioners asked him first to name his Pietenfeld neighbours whom he had seen at the diabolical gatherings. They then interrupted him to ask specifically whether or not his four unmarried siblings were also witches. Enders proceeded to name his sisters Richella, aged thirteen, and Catharina, aged nine, and his two other brothers Jacob (fifteen) and Lorenz (seven).[40] Georg Gutmann was also pressured into naming these siblings.[41] Similarly, when the commissioners resumed the interrogation of Barbara Haubner on 30 January 1618, five days after the previous session, they requested that she continue her list of accomplices, 'especially in Eichstätt' (meaning the town).[42] These are the only cases in the principality in which one finds the interrogators prompting a suspect on this point.

If patterns of association can be identified in the lists of accomplices identified by individual witch-suspects, then the tension which I believe to be palpable in the confrontations between Barbara Haubner and two of her denouncers may be the product of more than the stressful situation in which they took place. This tension may also reflect the intimate ties which bound the suspect to both Wappel Weber and Enders Gutmann. The witch-arrests of 1617–18 were concentrated in the villages in the immediate vicinity of Eichstätt. It is possible, however, to demonstrate closer connections between certain of these villages which may provide a key to the relationships between the witch-suspects

[39] StAN, Hexenakten 48 (E. Gutmann), 13 January 1618 (a.m.).
[40] Ibid., 13 January 1618 (a.m.).
[41] StAN, Hexenakten 48 (G. Gutmann), 1 February 1618 (a.m.).
[42] StAN, Hexenakten 48 (B. Haubner), 30 January 1618 (p.m.).

resident in them. The villages of Landershofen and Pietenfeld an der Leithen lay on opposite banks of the Altmühl directly to the east of Eichstätt (see Map 2). Pietenfeld is 2 km south of its namesake on the Leithen as the crow flies; continuing in this direction for a further 2 ½ km one comes next to Adelschlag. Twelve of the first nineteen witches convicted at the beginning of the final phase of persecution in Eichstätt came from these four villages. Apart from their own neighbours in Pietenfeld and individuals in Landershofen, the Gutmann brothers named accomplices from Pfünz and Buxheim.[43] Pfünz is the next village to the east of both Landershofen and Pietenfeld; Buxheim is about 7 km to the south-east of Pietenfeld or 6km from Adelschlag in the same direction. To these villages harbouring alleged witches, Haubner added Möckenlohe, about 2 km south of her own village of Adelschlag.[44] Of the witch-suspects arrested towards the beginning of the final phase of persecution for whom interrogation transcripts are extant, only Wappel Weber voluntarily cited individuals resident in other places, including at least twenty-nine in the capital.[45] In contrast, Kunigunda Bonschab, the second of the urban witch-suspects of this period for whom records exist did not list a single accomplice from beyond the town gates, despite herself being named by Weber.[46]

The suspects named by Wappel Weber, the Gutmann brothers and Barbara Haubner were not, however, known to them by reputation alone. They knew the biographies of the individuals whom they denounced as witches. Haubner, for example, described the second of her accomplices thus: 'The imprisoned scribe's brother-in-law, formerly resident in Attenfeld who can now be found with his daughter at Pietenfeld'.[47] In this one description Haubner reveals her knowledge

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[43] StAN, Hexenakten 48 (E. Gutmann), 13 January 1618 (a.m.), and (G. Gutmann), 29 January 1618 (a.m.).

[44] StAN, Hexenakten 48 (B. Haubner), 25 January 1618 (p.m.).

[45] StAN, Hexenakten 48 (W. Weber), 16 December 1617 (a.m.), 30 December 1617 (a.m.), and 3 January 1618 (a.m.).

[46] StAN, Hexenakten 48 (K. Bonschab), named forty-seven individuals over seven sessions of interrogation from 22 January 1618 (p.m.) to 5 February 1618 (a.m.). She was identified by her alias, the Crispineßin, in Weber's confession, StAN, Hexenakten 48 (W. Weber), 3 January 1618 (a.m.). The eighty-two accomplices named by Barbara Ruoser, the first of the town suspects for whom documentation exists, also came exclusively from the town with one exception, an unnamed cook who had moved to Dolnstein, StAN, Hexenakten 48 (B. Ruoser), over six sessions between 15 December 1617 (p.m.) and 8 January 1618 (a.m.).

[47] StAN, Hexenakten 48 (B. Haubner), 25 January 1618 (p.m.).

of another family's relations and movements across local communities. This knowledge should not surprise us. A collection of local villages would, for instance, have formed a small economic bloc in the wider region and provided a bigger pool of marriageable partners than could be produced by one village alone. It is no coincidence that five of the first six female defendants from 1617 for whom there is trial material were all 'born and brought up' in places away from those in which they married. Three of these were daughters of villages in the locality of Pietenfeld and Adelschlag: Wappel Weber was born in Wettstetten about 5 ½ km north of Ingolstadt;[48] Kunigunda Bonschab in Ebel bei Nassenfels, 4km south of Adelschlag;[49] and Haubner in Wolkertshofen, 2km east of Nassenfels.[50] The other two travelled further distances to end up in Eichstätt: Anna Harding had been born in Markt Jettingen in Swabia;[51] and Anna Beck in Ellingen.[52] One should not infer from these migrations that witch persecution was an attack on 'marginal' women who were alien to a village; exogamous marriage patterns could not have been sustained if women who migrated for this purpose, especially from near-by villages, were not usually accepted by their affinal relatives and the local community. In any case, Enders Gutmann, a native of Pietenfeld, had taken his wife from outside the village, from Pfünz, but, although still living, she was not named or arrested as a witch.[53]

Barbara Haubner's testimony also reveals a more interesting connection between Pietenfeld and her own village than those contained in the description quoted above. Among those whom she denounced was one Meekl, the brother of the tavern-keeper of Pietenfeld, who was now her neighbour.[54] The landlord in question would have been Leonhard Gutmann, the father of Enders and Georg, and the alleged accomplice their uncle.[55] This information suggests that there may have been more to Haubner's relationship with Anna Schiller (the mother of Enders and Georg) than being a name on her list of accomplices, and more

[48] StAN, Hexenakten 48 (W. Weber), 12 December 1617.
[49] StAN, Hexenakten 48 (K. Bonschab), 19 January 1618 (p.m.).
[50] StAN, Hexenakten 48 (B. Haubner), 19 January 1618 (p.m.).
[51] StAN, Hexenakten 48 (A. Harding), 19 January 1618.
[52] StAN, Hexenakten 48 (A. Beck), 23 January 1618.
[53] StAN, Hexenakten 48 (E. Gutmann), 14 December 1617.
[54] StAN, Hexenakten 48 (B. Haubner), 25 January 1618 (p.m.).
[55] The name of the Gutmann brothers' father was given by Enders in answer to the biographical questions posed towards the beginning of his interrogation, StAN, Hexenakten 48 (E. Gutmann), 14 December 1617 (a.m.).

to her relationship with the Gutmann brothers than a shared jail. One might ask too what relationship Haubner might have had with Barbara Khager. They were both midwives of their respective, neighbouring, villages and may perhaps have shared clients, especially as Haubner at least may have lived in and around Adelschlag for thirty-five of her fifty-five years.[56]

And what of Haubner's relationship with Khager's son and Anna Bonschab? Haubner was also known as the Stuterin because her husband was, at the time of her arrest, the horseherd at Moritzbrunn, a hamlet to the north-west of Adelschlag;[57] Michael Ghayer (Khager's son) herded horses at Pietenfeld;[58] and Anna Bonschab was the wife of a *Rossbauer*, a horse breeder.[59] It is unlikely that the horse breeders and herdsmen of the region would have been ignorant of their colleagues and competitors. They would have met each other at markets either in Eichstätt, Neuburg an der Donau, Ingolstadt and wherever else the sale of horses was conducted locally. Perhaps they shared stock for breeding too and encountered one another when they were herding animals to and from pasture. From her description of her first acts of malevolent witchcraft, for example, it is clear that Haubner's husband had worked over quite an extensive area. The first of these harmful acts was against a black horse being watched over by her husband in the meadows at Oberzell, about 7 km to the east of Adelschlag where the couple resided and 9 ½ km from Moritzbrunn where her husband was working at the time of her arrest.[60] Haubner's second malevolent crime was the murder of another horse, also black, also being herded by her husband, but this time on the 'Berg' at Eichstätt.[61] The midwife's testimony also reveals that he had looked after horses at Pietenfeld, where she had gone with him about twenty years before her arrest.[62] It is possible too that Haubner's husband and Michael Ghayer were employees of Anna Bonschab's husband. It seems likely therefore that

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[56] StAN, Hexenakten 48 (B. Haubner), 19 January 1618 (p.m.).
[57] Ibid., 19 January 1618 (p.m.).
[58] Ibid., 25 January 1618 (p.m.). Barbara's surname was always written as Khager and Michael's as Ghayer. I have retained the distinction.
[59] Rossbäuerin was the common name given to Anna Bonschab and taken from the occupation of her husband, e.g. StAN, Hexenakten 48 (W. Weber), 16 December 1617 (a.m.).
[60] StAN, Hexenakten 48 (B. Haubner), 3 February 1618 (p.m.).
[61] Ibid., 3 February 1618 (p.m.).
[62] Ibid., 23 January 1618 (a.m.).

Haubner had been well-acquainted with the Pietenfeld witches both as a midwife and the wife of a herdsman.

One can only make assumptions about the connections between these individuals based on the residential and occupational details which have been recorded in the extant interrogation material. There is, however, one other clue to the closeness of the relationships between these villagers. In the testimony transcribed during the interrogation of Georg Gutmann, the executed Fischerin an der Leithen was twice described as his mother-in-law.[63] The "Urfehdebuch" shows that only one fisherman's wife, indeed only one woman from Pietenfeld an der Leithen, had been executed at about this time; her name was Anna Spät.[64] This additional information means that four of the witch-suspects of the villages to the east and south of the town of Eichstätt—Spät, the Gutmann brothers and their mother (Anna Schiller)—were related. It also indicates that the Gutmann brothers may have named more members of their affinal kin among their accomplices than an initial glance at the interrogation transcripts would suggest. Both denounced the 'Old Spätin', almost certainly the Fischerin herself, whilst Georg also named her daughter (probably his sister-in-law rather than his wife), the 'Young Spätin'.[65] One wonders what other familial ties may have bound these early suspects and their alleged accomplices together, especially when one observes that only Georg Gutmann described the Fischerin as his mother-in-law. To Enders Gutmann, as to the other suspects, she was just the Fischerin or Fischer Anna.[66]

Georg Gutmann's references to his mother-in-law reveal more than just an additional familial relationship. Six days before his execution, Gutmann confirmed that he had once publicly accused Anna Spät and Barbara Haubner of murdering his first wife (Spät's daughter), and he now stood by that accusation.[67] On the same morning, Haubner was also asked about this death (it is not clear who was interrogated first), a murder to which she had already confessed, without prompting, on the afternoon of 3 February. On both occasions she claimed merely to have

[63] StAN, Hexenakten 48 (G. Gutmann), 29 January 1618 (a.m.) and 10 February 1618 (a.m.).
[64] DiöAE, "Urfehdebuch", ff. 127v and 130r–131r.
[65] StAN, Hexenakten 48 (E. Gutmann), 13 January 1618 (a.m.), and (G. Gutmann), 29 January 1618 (a.m.).
[66] For example, StAN, Hexenakten 48 (E. Gutmann), 13 January 1618 (a.m.).
[67] StAN, Hexenakten 48 (G. Gutmann), 10 February 1618 (a.m.).

aided Spät in the task of poisoning Georg's wife.[68] The alleged murder was not attributed by the suspects or the interrogators to Haubner's status as a witch. It was discussed as a case of straightforward felonious killing. The circumstances or truth of Gutmann's accusation against the two women cannot be substantiated, but the accusation does show that he could imagine that his mother-in-law and Haubner might have acted closely together in what was a secret act, and that this understanding had a basis in fact.

The rest of Haubner's own testimony confirms that she did have a good relationship with Anna Spät. Indeed, the Fischerin dominates Haubner's confession. When asked about her diabolical baptism, the midwife stated that she had gone with Anna Bonschab to Spät's house. They then went on to the Altmühl, which ran by Spät's village, in which Haubner was to be baptized; this baptism was also witnessed by Anna Schiller, the Gutmann brothers' mother.[69] Afterwards they had returned to Spät's house for a celebration.[70] It was also Spät, along with Schiller, who had supplied children for the larger diabolical gatherings. When later she was asked about the exhumation of infant corpses, Haubner confessed that on these occasions she had helped Bonschab and Spät dig up the bodies of children born to the Dürschin and the Schmidin which had been buried in the cemetery at Adelschlag;[71] their bones were burned to a powder at Spät's house (by Spät) and used to 'make weather'.[72] Earlier she had stated, after confessing to killing her husband's horses, that 'she and the Fischerin of [Pietenfeld] an der Leithen helped one another, and murdered a dappled horse of the Fischerin's ten years ago'.[73] Haubner then confessed that, fifteen years previously, 'she and the Rossbäuerin had helped one another'; the Rossbäuerin, Anna Bonschab, had killed a horse, a cow and a calf.[74]

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[68] StAN, Hexenakten 48 (B. Haubner), 3 February 1618 (p.m.) and 10 February 1618 (a.m.). In the first version, Spät had 'made a drink which they gave to the Fischerin's daughter'. She died six days later. No mention is made of the daughter's relationship to Gutmann. In the second version, in answer to an explicit question about the murder in which the relationships were laid out, she replied 'Yes, it was true, the Fischerin brought her a drink to give to her daughter, and they gave it to her'. Again, the daughter was said to have died six days later.

[69] Ibid., 23 January 1618 (a.m.).

[70] Ibid., 23 January 1618 (a.m.).

[71] Ibid., 5 February 1618 (p.m.).

[72] Ibid., 5 February 1618 (p.m.).

[73] Ibid., 3 February 1618 (p.m.).

[74] Ibid., 3 February 1618 (p.m.).

This testimony about Haubner's malevolence is unusual. Hers is the only Eichstätt case in which the suspect confessed to causing harm in concert with one or other of her accomplices. Indeed, not only the Eichstätt witch-suspects, but their contemporaries throughout Europe often claimed to have acted alone in their tales of malevolence.[75] Whether or not Haubner consciously adopted this strategy here, the effect of citing an accomplice was to distance herself from the acts of harm. The women had 'helped one another', but it was Spät and Bonschab who had actually killed Gutmann's wife and the animals in Haubner's narrative. This strategy is reminiscent of those adopted by all Eichstätt witch-suspects in their stories of weather-magic and the exhumation of children. They attended both situations with other witches, but they were careful to assume the role of the unwilling or ineffective witch in their confessions. The suspects watched the performance of weather-magic, but rarely stated that they participated in the ritual, and they observed that its effects were not known or that it was only partially successful, if at all. These same suspects stood by as children were unearthed from their graves, but someone else took the bodies away to burn the bones into powder or boil the flesh down to an ointment. In Haubner's own account of weather-magic, she claimed that she and Spät had to poison meadows, make frost and fog, and do great damage to cereals and fruit: 'In sum, they caused nothing good with it [their powder]'.[76] She did not, however, give examples of when or where this harm was supposed to have been carried out. Towards the end of the persecutions, Peter Porzin confessed to helping at three attempts at weather-magic (with whom, he did not state). He did not know, however, whether they had been successful.[77] The consistency with which the suspects distanced themselves from acts of ritual magic only confirms their inability to imagine that they could do anything so catastrophic to the community or as vile to a corpse, even if they could articulate an understanding of how weather-magic or the exhumation and burnings of infant bodies might happen.

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[75] For example, none of the three witches in one of the earliest English witchcraft pamphlets to appear after the Witchcraft Act of 1563 confessed to committing her malicious acts with the aid of her sister witches, *The Examination and Confession of certaine Wytches at Chensforde in the Countie of Essex* (London, 1566), repr. in Gibson (ed.), *Early Modern Witches*, pp. 10–24.

[76] StAN, Hexenakten 48 (B. Haubner), 5 February 1618 (p.m.).

[77] StAN, Hexenakten 45 (P. Porzin), 28 September 1627.

Despite the sensational elements of these sections of the confession narratives, however, my interest lies in the accomplices with whom the suspect imagined herself attending smaller gatherings of local witches for purposeful magic. By the time Haubner came to discuss her sacrilege and malevolence on the afternoon of 3 February 1618, nine inhabitants of the villages to the east and south of Eichstätt, that is members of communities which appear to have had strong ties, had been executed and a further three were in custody.[78] Residents of the town of Eichstätt were, or had been, imprisoned alongside her in the town hall too.[79] There had also been other executions about which Haubner must have known either because she had attended them as a spectator or heard about them through local gossip.[80] In addition, she had already named at least twelve other individuals among her accomplices who did not later interest the witch commissioners.[81] Haubner therefore had a large pool of witch-suspects from which to choose accomplices to her acts of witchcraft. She did not name any of those still living in describing these acts, but I do not think that this was a deliberate strategy to protect them from prosecution. Instead, Haubner instinctively confessed to acting with her real-life gossips who had already been indicted and executed and with whom she was commonly associated by Georg Gutmann and other near-neighbours. One can also argue that the consistency with which Anna Schiller, Barbara Khager and Anna Bonschab were cited together in stories of witchcraft activity in the Pietenfeld and Adelschlag confessions shows that Wappel Weber, the Gutmann brothers and Haubner could likewise imagine them working together.

Here we are confronted with the same dynamic as that which occurred in the naming of neighbours who were seen at the larger

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[78] The nine executed villagers were: Annas Scheur, Lehenbauer (mother and daughter), Spät, Fackelmayr, Schiller and Bonschab, together with Barbara Khager and Wappel Weber. Those still in custody were the Gutmann brothers and Michael Ghayer.

[79] These Eichstätt suspects included Barbara Ruoser who was executed on 26 January 1618, eight days after Haubner's arrest, StAN, Hexenakten 48 (B. Ruoser), cover, and (B. Haubner), 18 January 1618. Kunigunda Bonschab had been arrested on the same day as Haubner, StAN, Hexenakten 48 (K. Bonschab), 18 January 1618, whilst Anna Harding and Anna Beck had been arrested on 19 and 23 January respectively, StAN, Hexenakten 48 (A. Harding), 19 January 1618, and (A. Beck), 23 January 1618.

[80] Six other women had been executed since 1617. As she was fifty-five years of age, Haubner must have been aware of the other cases of witchcraft in the principality since 1590, and contemporary cases in the rest of Franconia, Swabia and Bavaria.

[81] StAN, Hexenakten 48 (B. Haubner), 25 January 1618 (p.m.) and 30 January 1618 (p.m.).

gatherings of the witch sect. In both instances, the suspect, unable to withstand further torment, peopled her confession with intimates rather than enemies and mere acquaintances. Under intense pressure, it was these neighbours and kin who came to mind first because it was easier to diabolize the situations one usually shared with them than to invent wholly fictional ones contrived from relationships one could not imagine having in normal circumstances. Thus, throughout her confession, Haubner placed specific events (the baptism, the desecration of the host and the burning of the infants' corpses) at Anna Spät's house, and peopled these and other episodes with a particular identifiable group of women (Spät, Anna Bonschab and Anna Schiller). These women had attended ordinary baptisms, celebrations, church services and funerals together; and they may even have conspired together in an act of murder. They were gossips who had shared the ordinary experiences which they were now forced to diabolize and a consequence of this imaginative process was that they ended up naming each other as accomplices.

The connections which can be identified between the witch-suspects of the villages within the district of Eichstätt provide the context for Haubner's reactions to the two denouncers brought into her presence. Haubner's confused and ill-advised response to Wappel Weber's denunciation (that she had seen her at the witches' gatherings) was in part a product of the stressful situation in which she then found herself, but it was not entirely so. Other defendants were sufficiently astute to deny the accusation by stating their innocence, in Margretha Geiger's case quite forcefully. Recently-arrested witch-suspects were also aware of their fellow inmates, although they may not always have been able to communicate with one another. Maria Mayr, for example, passed on a message to the interrogators from Kunigunda Pronner stating that they had done her an injustice.[82] It was probably obvious to the new inmate, especially after the first session of interrogation, that any negative gossip which had circulated about these detained witch-suspects in the outside world was untrue, but if they expected to benefit from a degree of solidarity among their cellmates they were soon disabused of this hope. It must have been a shock to come face-to-face with another prisoner, someone who shared your predicament, and hear her denounce you as a witch. This was more the case when she was a close neighbour.

[82] StAN, Hexenakten 48 (M. Mayr), 20 November 1618.

Haubner and Weber (aged about fifty-five and sixty respectively) were apparently long-term residents of neighbouring villages;[83] through community rituals and shared experiences, as well as through Anna Spät, their common gossip, they knew the other local witch-convicts and suspects intimately. There is no evidence in the interrogation transcripts that animosity characterized their relationship; they merely listed one another among the accomplices whom they had seen at the diabolical gatherings of the witch sect (in Haubner's case only after the confrontation). And yet Haubner found herself confronted by this potential ally. Her neighbour had succumbed to the very pressures she was now experiencing and the realization of this must have filled Haubner with despair and fear. It should not surprise us to find one among so many witch-suspects falter at this early stage in the interrogation and begin to confess; the wonder is that this is the only surviving example.

Haubner knew her second denouncer almost as well as she did Weber. Enders Gutmann lived near to Haubner, but in this confrontation the parties do not, from our historical perspective, appear to have been of equal status. Gutmann was male and he was, at about twenty-eight years of age, a generation younger than the defendant.[84] Indeed, Haubner, as both Anna Schiller's friend and a local midwife, may well have known him since his birth. Gutmann's late father had been the *Richter* (judge) of Pietenfeld as well as its innkeeper (the professions of the Gutmann brothers are not known), but whether this gave him significantly greater standing in his village than the midwife Haubner had in Adelschlag one cannot now state. Yet despite the political and social advantages one associates with masculinity, lineage and age throughout early modern Europe (at least in the context of witchcraft accusations), Enders and Georg Gutmann had still been arrested before this woman. As in the relationship between Haubner and Weber, there is no evidence of malice on the part of either suspect in this confrontation, notwithstanding

[83] Haubner stated that she was fifty-five years old. She had lived in or around Adelschlag at least since her marriage thirty-five years before her arrest, StAN, Hexenakten 48 (B. Haubner), 19 January 1618 (p.m.). Weber had married three times, but did not state exactly where she had lived with each husband. At the time of her arrest she was living in Pietenfeld with a daughter from her first marriage who had married a farmer there. This daughter, the eldest of the surviving children from this marriage, must have been in her twenties and may therefore have lived in the village for up to a decade, if her parents had not also lived there, StAN, Hexenakten 48 (W. Weber), 13 December 1617 (a.m.).

[84] StAN, Hexenakten 48 (E. Gutmann), 14 December 1617 (a.m.).

Georg's accusation of murder against Haubner. Enders's denunciation had its origins in the intricate network of communal relations which bound the inhabitants of one group of villages together. He knew Haubner at least as one of his mother's acquaintances and when forced to name accomplices, she simply came to mind in that context. Like her confusion after the first confrontation with Wappel Weber, the phrase with which Haubner reproached Enders Gutmann, 'whether he would wash his hands in her blood…', must be understood in the light of these complex, yet intimate, local relationships.[85]

The reproach was no empty rhetorical phrase. The Eichstätt interrogation transcripts are full of linguistic devices which were part of the local 'restricted code' of communication, a code which was both 'strongly metaphorical' and 'rooted in local relationships'.[86] In the context of the witch trials, this code was commonly deployed by the witch-suspects at the beginning of each interrogation to deny involvement in the witch sect. These denials were frequently articulated in the language of Catholic orthodoxy and early modern oath making—appeals to Jesus, God, the saints and the Virgin to stand as witnesses to the suspect's innocence—or as part of a more emotive language, backed with tears, that appealed directly to the interrogators (being innocent as a child, for example).[87] Each appeal, brief though it may have been, was loaded with meaning which did not have to be explained, just as most early modern people understood the import of individual words of slander (whore, witch, traitor) without having to state explicitly for a court what consequences they would have for the reputation of the victim if they stuck.[88] In the exchanges of the witchcraft interrogation,

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[85] StAN, Hexenakten 48 (B. Haubner), 20 January 1618 (a.m.).

[86] The notion of the 'restricted code' of communication in face-to-face societies like Eichstätt comes from Basil Bernstein (ed.), *Class, Codes and Control*, vol. 1 *Theatrical Studies towards a Sociology of Language* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1971), pp. 175–8. It forms part of the basis of David Sabean's linguistic approach to early modern communities outlined in his introduction to *Power in the Blood*, pp. 1–36, and the notes on pp. 214–21 (especially p. 215, n. 2).

[87] Anna Harding, who took almost a month to break under torture, gave a comprehensive series of such oaths, including: she 'is as pious as God in Heaven'; if she was such a woman God would turn her into a pillar of salt in the marketplace; and when bound to the strappado and lifted clear of the ground, she cried out 'Jesus, Mary, help, I am no witch', although she then began her confession immediately, StAN, Hexenakten 48 (A. Harding), 19 January 1618, 15 February 1618 (p.m.) and 17 February 1618 (a.m.). Barbara Rabel claimed to be 'as innocent as a child in the cradle', StAN, Hexenakten 48 (B. Rabel), 7 September 1618 (a.m.).

[88] On honour and the legal attempts to restore it, see Fuchs, *Hexerei und Zauberei vor*

the language of denial conveyed the innocence and distress of each suspect in short-hand, a code which was immediately recognizable to the listeners and remains so to historians in cultures which retain some of the keys to it. The images and words of the 'restricted code' were so well understood that they were repeated by many of the witch-suspects. Less than a month after Barbara Haubner asked Enders Gutmann if he would 'wash his hands in her blood', Anna Harding stated that she 'was certainly no such person and the lord commissioners would not want to wash their hands in her blood'.[89] Maria Mayr also answered Harding's confrontation by claiming that her accuser would wash her hands in her blood and did so, in this case, out of enmity.[90] Haubner's response was not therefore a simple challenge to just anyone with whom she had been confronted. Rooted in complex local relationships, her words were invested with an intensity of emotion which may have reflected the nature of her personal relations with the Gutmann family. It is a reproach that one might expect a fifty-five-year-old woman of social status to throw at a young man who had accused her, without cause, of a heinous crime; and it conveys at once Gutmann's responsibility for her probable death (having her blood on his hands) and the betrayal that had to happen to facilitate it (washing one's hands of a situation in the manner of Pontius Pilot). It would not make much sense for a witch-suspect to use this phrase against a mere acquaintance who had denounced her; the greater the social distance between two individuals, the less the sense of betrayal in the accusation. It was intimacy rather than enmity which prompted the use of this shaming phrase.

Michael Hochenschildt and his denouncers

Placed in the context of a series of overlapping relationships among the inhabitants of the villages around Eichstätt, Barbara Haubner's responses to her accusers take on a different aspect than modern witchcraft historiography might lead one to expect. They were not the result of local conflict, but were rather the product of the dynamics of the

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dem Reichskammergericht, and Cavallo and Cerutti, "Female Honor and the Social Control of Reproduction in Piedmont between 1600 and 1800". On informal, if violent, means to avenge honour, see Valentin Groebner, "Losing Face, Saving Face: Noses and Honour in Late Medieval Towns", *History Workshop Journal*, 40 (Autumn, 1995), pp. 1–15.

[89] StAN, Hexenakten 48 (A. Harding), 15 February 1618 (p.m.).

[90] StAN, Hexenakten 48 (M. Mayr), 23 June 1618 (p.m.).

interrogation. Forced to name accomplices, Haubner, Wappel Weber, Enders Gutmann and their neighbours denounced each other and their closest associates as witches. In doing so they exposed parts of the intricate social networks which bound close-knit communities together. An examination of the testimony given by Michael Hochenschildt in his responses to the denunciations laid against him allows one to extend this analysis.

Hochenschildt was quite clear about where he felt he stood socially with his denouncers. He made an important distinction, for example, between his relationship with Hans Baur and that with Lorenz Brandt. His relations with Brandt seem to have been cordial, but they stopped at the tavern door.[91] Those with Baur extended further and constituted friendship. Hochenschildt had apparently 'long held' a good opinion of Baur, his 'good neighbour', and he attempted to show this by stating that they ate and drank together.[92] He did not claim this for his relationship with any of his other denouncers.

In Hochenschildt's deposition eating and drinking assume historical importance as the *defining* activities of close friendship. He did not choose to illustrate the relationship with Baur by another activity, like the carousing which characterized his lesser friendship with Brandt, or by a specific event (such as the trip to the wedding recounted by Margretha Bittelmayr), or by citing, for example, mutual membership of the local councils or one of the lay confraternities which were introduced into Eichstätt under Westerstetten's patronage. Eating and drinking were significant social activities by which neighbourhood, friendship and other, more formal, associations were confirmed and maintained (and they remain so today),[93] but as they were used by Hochenschildt they should be regarded as 'relational idioms', part of the local restricted language code, and therefore a means by which the quality of the relationship in question, as it was perceived by one person at least, was

[91] StAN, Hexenakten 45 (M. Hochenschildt), 14 March 1628.

[92] Ibid., 14 March 1628.

[93] Alan Bray and Michel Rey have analysed the importance of formal occasions of eating and drinking as symbols of friendship in their "The Body of the Friend: Continuity and Change in Masculine Friendship in the Seventeenth Century", in Tim Hitchcock and Michèle Cohen (eds.), *English Masculinities 1660–1800* (London: Longman, 1999), pp. 65–84 (pp. 68–9). See also B. Ann Tlusty, *Bacchus and Civic Order: The Culture of Drink in Early Modern Germany* (Charlottesville, VA: University Press of Virginia, 2001), and Lyndal Roper, "Drinking, Whoring and Gorging: Brutish Indiscipline and the Formation of Protestant Identity", in ead., *Oedipus and the Devil*, pp. 145–67.

expressed clearly to others. It is difficult now to produce other evidence to confirm the relationship between Hochenschildt and Baur. Baur had been executed almost eight years before Hochenschildt's arrest and the trial transcript is no longer extant.[94] Hochenschildt did assert, however, that he had been seduced into the sect by Baur's late wife fifteen years previously which would suggest a long-term association with the Baurs.[95] As in the case of the Pietenfeld and Adelschlag witches, such statements often reflect intimate rather than distant relationships between the suspect and his accomplice.

I will return to eating and drinking as a relational idiom in the following chapter. Here, however, I will discuss the term 'good neighbour'. The phrase occurs on one other occasion in the Eichstätt witchcraft material. On Monday 30 August 1593, the Eichstätt council deliberated upon a report from the administrator of Hirschberg who was also the provost of Berching. In it he recounted that the wife of Jesse Vockher, a citizen of Berching, had borne a child which had subsequently died; she herself had gone mad. Suspicious of their neighbour, Vockher and his mother-in-law had sought the advice of a wisewoman at Leutterbach, Magdalena Pößl, who inevitably confirmed that the Punckin, Georg Claßner's wife, was indeed the perpetrator of the child's murder and the wife's illness. The authorities to whom this case was reported had just emerged from a period of witch persecution which had resulted in the execution of at least nineteen women, but their decision did not reflect this experience. They observed that the Punckin was innocent and that there was 'good reason' to punish Vockher and his mother-in-law for this 'forbidden thing', that is, consulting Pößl.[96] The councillors chose, however, merely to admonish the parties from Berching 'to speak again as good friends and neighbours'.[97] To be a good friend and neighbour, therefore, was to live peaceably with one's fellow citizens. But it did not mean all citizens. It referred only to those individuals who came into contact with each other on intimate occasions (like women at or around birth) or in important situations (council meetings attended by men drawn from the same small group of elite families, for example). In

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[94] Baur was executed on 22 August 1620, DiöAE, "Urfehdebuch", ff. 187r–v. Hochenschildt was arrested on 14 March 1628, StAN, Hexenakten 45 (M. Hochenschildt), cover.

[95] Ibid., 15 March 1628. Unless she was indicted under an alias or other married name, Hans Baur's wife was never arrested for witchcraft.

[96] StAN, Hochstift Eichstätt Literalien 298, f. 131r.

[97] Ibid., f. 131r.

stating that he had always regarded Hans Baur as his good neighbour, Hochenschildt was confirming that there had never been irresolvable conflict between the two men and their households, and he was also elevating that relationship above those with individuals about whom he said that he could say 'nothing'.

Hochenschildt retained this image of Baur as a 'good neighbour' throughout the eight years since his friend's death. He continued to do so even though he had now discovered that Baur had been among the fifteen witches by whom he had been denounced. The other denouncers, including the Gelbschusterin with whom Michael had fallen out, fared equally well in Hochenschildt's analysis of his relationships with them; there is no sense in which he perceived them as witches, despite the confessions which had been extracted from them and broadcast to the spectators who came to watch the executions. I do not think that Hochenschildt was alone in this perception. One has always to bear in mind that not one of the Eichstätt witch-suspects for whom transcripts exist had been denounced to the witch commission by a supposed victim of her witchcraft. The very fact that Hochenschildt could, however, maintain that one of his denouncers was innocent of the crime of witchcraft in these circumstances, and that he could not say that the others were not (implicitly undermining the legitimacy of the commission's convictions), supports the interpretation of his relationship with Hans Baur as being close.

Evidence from England reinforces this interpretation of the relationship between Hochenschildt and Baur. John Bossy and Annabel Gregory have observed that 'good neighbourhood' has a long history of use in England, up until at least the late sixteenth century, to express 'the virtues of peacefulness'.[98] This seems to be precisely the meaning given to the similar expression 'good friends and neighbours' as it was employed by the Eichstätt councillors judging the conflict between the Vockhers and the Claßners. Their conflict was not to be resolved through the conventional means of justice (trial and punishment) but by

[98] John Bossy, "Blood and Baptism: Kinship, Community and Christianity in Western Europe from the Fourteenth to the Seventeenth Centuries", in Derek Baker (ed.), *Sanctity and Secularity: The Church and the World* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1973), pp. 129–43 (pp. 142–3), and Gregory, "Witchcraft, Politics and 'Good Neighbourhood' in Early Modern Rye", pp. 56–8. Eva Labouvie also discusses witchcraft and good neighbours in *Zauberei und Hexenwerk. Ländlicher Hexenglaube in der frühen Neuzeit* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 1991), pp. 82–95. Here witchcraft became a means of resolving neighbourly tensions in the manner described by Walz in *Hexenglaube und magische Kommunikation*.

returning to a state of peacefulness among themselves. Both the alleged victims and the defendants were made responsible for re-establishing the social equilibrium within their community and banishing the disruption to it which they were deemed, implicitly, to have caused. 'Good neighbourhood' was therefore the opposite state of 'the world-turned-upside-down', and of the heresy and witchcraft which were perceived by early modern commentators to be disorderly and socially disruptive. In stating that Baur was his 'good neighbour' Hochenschildt was stating that they lived together in the community at peace. In persisting with this image of their relationship despite the accusation of witchcraft made by Baur in the course of his trial, Hochenschildt was observing that the denunciation was a lie because someone with whom one was a 'good neighbour' would not intentionally disturb the peacefulness that characterized one's relationship.

In Hochenschildt's testimony, therefore, one can detect subtle differences in his feelings towards and knowledge of his neighbours. His relationships with his denouncers ranged from close friendship to mere acquaintance, and for the most part they seem to have been either cordial or uneventful. It is against Hochenschildt's evaluations of these particular relationships, which were more comprehensive than the usual acknowledgement by the suspect that they knew the denouncer but were not guilty of the charge, that one should appraise his confession that there had been animosity between himself and Maria Lang, the Gelbschusterin. This piece of information was willingly supplied by Hochenschildt, despite the situation in which he found himself, and it was the only suggestion at this point in the testimony that he had had altercations with any of his neighbours. The quarrel was also evidently a minor one. It had occurred over a pair of shoes, perhaps repaired or made for Hochenschildt by Maria's husband, Valtin Lanng, and had apparently been resolved. Hochenschildt stated that he had *once* been in conflict with her; but he also judged that it was not a case of mortal enmity.[99] Lang does not seem to have referred to any conflict with him in her own testimony.[100]

In fact, this falling out apparently over someone's handiwork is an example of the kind of petty disagreement one should expect to find

[99] StAN, Hexenakten 45 (M. Hochenschildt), 14 March 1628.

[100] At least, no reference of any conflict is mentioned by Hochenschildt's interrogators. There is no extant transcript recording the Gelbschusterin's interrogation.

between neighbours in any community. It does not fit the pattern of conflicts which other historians have identified as precipitating accusations of witchcraft elsewhere in the early modern world. It did not turn on a refusal of charity, it did not arise at one of the important emotional events in life, such as childbirth, and it did not form part of some local factionalism. It may well have offended the honour of the Lang's household and therefore the episode had the potential to turn into a long-running dispute, but there were other ways of re-establishing one's honour in such cases than accusing them of witchcraft, however convenient that might seem to be in the middle of a major witch panic. The shoes did not therefore provoke deep and continuous disruption in the relations between the denouncer and the suspect.

Margretha Geiger and her denouncers

The enmity between Margretha Geiger and two of her denouncers, Anna Beck (Hochenschildt's sister-in-law) and Judith Obermayr, seems to have been much deeper than that between Hochenschildt and Maria Lang. The transcript of Obermayr's interrogation no longer exists, but those for Beck and Anna Harding, the third of the denouncers with whom Geiger was confronted, do.[101] Both suspects were asked specifically to confirm that they had seen Geiger and also Valtin Lanng at the nocturnal gatherings. They were asked because the witch commissioners were coming to the end of one set of cases and were about to move on to the next, and they seem to have thought it prudent to seek such confirmation before a confrontation took place. Beck was interrogated on this point during her last session of interrogation on 12 March 1618,[102] and Harding on the morning of 23 March.[103] On the same morning both women, together with Obermayr, were taken to confront Geiger who had been arrested on 21 March.[104] Beck did not, incidentally, later accompany Harding and Obermayr to confront Lanng (who had been arrested on 22 March) because she had expressed doubt about her initial denunciation.[105] It is possible, therefore, that Beck

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[101] StAN, Hexenakten 48 (A. Beck) and (A. Harding).
[102] StAN, Hexenakten 48 (A. Beck), 12 March 1618 (a.m.).
[103] StAN, Hexenakten 48 (A. Harding), 23 March 1618 (a.m.). Harding's trial still had three months to go until her last session of interrogation, ibid., 22 June 1618 (p.m.).
[104] StAN, Hexenakten 48 (M. Geiger), 23 March 1618 (a.m.).
[105] Having confirmed that Lanng and Geiger were the same kind of people as she

persisted in her accusation of Geiger for the very reason stated by the defendant, because Georg Beck held her in suspicion of witchcraft.

As in the narratives constructed by the Pietenfeld and Adelschlag witch-suspects, however, Geiger and Beck appear as neighbours in more than one key situation described by Beck. They participated together in an act of weather-magic and both were present in the raiding of Valtin Lanng's cellar.[106] When she was called to give testimony against Geiger, Beck also claimed to have attended a witches' meal at Geiger's house.[107] In the brief exchange which ensued Beck then called Geiger 'my dear Margrettlin', a diminutive which was clearly a term of endearment and unlikely to be used except by individuals who knew Geiger well.[108] In Geiger's own confession, the Sebastian Beck, as Anna was also known, was the first-named of the six godmothers who had attended her diabolical baptism.[109] It is difficult to tie these women closer together from the trial transcripts because the women of the town of Eichstätt shared a wider milieu of close associates than their acquaintances in neighbouring villages. In their daily lives they would simply have encountered a broader range of neighbours than the women of Pietenfeld and Adelschlag, for example, could have, and as a consequence more individuals appear in these witches' stories at the expense of intimate detail. The endearing nickname and the presence of Beck among Geiger's diabolical godmothers do, however, allow one to question the truth of Margretha Geiger's counter-accusation that Anna Beck had denounced her out of enmity.

By examining the more detailed responses to the denunciations laid before the witch-suspects, one can begin to suggest that the population of the prince-bishopric of Eichstätt was bound by a variety of generally cordial relationships, from the close friendship between Hochenschildt and Baur to mere acquaintance or knowledge of others among one's neighbours. Occasionally individuals might come into conflict, whether

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was, she went on to say 'but she doubts one [was] Schuster Valtin', StAN, Hexenakten 48 (A. Beck), 12 March 1618 (a.m.). For the confrontations with Lanng, see StAN, Hexenakten 48 (V. Lanng), 29 March 1618 (a.m.).

[106] StAN, Hexenakten 48 (A. Beck), 6 February 1618 (a.m.). Twelve witches entered this cellar to collect wine to take to a gathering on the Linsenwiesen. All were women; one was Lanng's wife.

[107] StAN, Hexenakten 48 (M. Geiger), 23 March 1618 (a.m.).

[108] Ibid., 23 March 1618 (a.m.).

[109] Ibid., 24 March 1618 (a.m.). The others were the late Kunigunda Bonschab, Anna Harding, the 'Biden Warbel', Judith Obermayr and Catharina Ströbl (also executed).

temporarily and superficially, like Hochenschildt and Maria Lang, or irreconcilably, like perhaps Anna Ruhr and the Kürschnerin of Pfalergasse, but together the defendants' statements about their relationships with their denouncers do not give the impression that deep social conflicts rent the principality as part of some paradigmatic general crisis. If these were the only direct comments on the state of personal relations in Eichstätt to be found in the witch-trial documents, then suspicions about their veracity might linger. The statements I have examined so far were made towards the beginning of each interrogation before torture had been threatened and as the suspect was trying to present herself as honourable and pious. Good relations with one's neighbours, alongside explicit claims to piety and assertions that the denunciations laid against them were unjust, were part of a strategy to insist on one's virtue as a proof of innocence. Once the suspect had, however, accepted the role of the guilty witch in the interrogation she occasionally continued to comment on her relationships with her victims and accomplices. Of equal, if not greater, significance when juxtaposed with these rare comments is the general silence about the factors which motivated Eichstätt witches to act maliciously against their neighbours, and the consistent failure of the witnesses to corroborate the witch-suspects' tales of harm.

Walburga Knab

During the course of her interrogation between July 1621 and February 1622, Walburga Knab confessed to nineteen acts of malevolent witchcraft.[110] Five of these acts were perpetrated against her own children and livestock; fourteen were directed against the persons or property of her neighbours. Witnesses were called to testify on 3 September 1621 when Knab had only confessed to twelve of the acts (four against her own household, two against Hans Baur's, and six against other inhabitants of Eichstätt).[111] Although her husband Georg was alive and therefore available to provide testimony, it was Knab who was the witness to the

[110] StAN, Hexenakten 45 (W. Knab), 30 July 1621 (a.m.), 5 August 1621, 6 August 1621 (a.m.), 28 August 1621, 22 September 1621 (a.m.), and 22 September 1621 (p.m.). These acts of witchcraft were abstracted in StAN, Hexenakten 45 (W. Knab—*malefacta*).

[111] The witness depositions were collected in StAN, Hexenakten 45 (W. Knab—*inquisition*).

harm she claimed to have committed against herself. This was not, however, unusual. From the other extant witness depositions, it appears that independent persons were never called by the interrogators to substantiate a suspect's self-destructiveness. The widow of Hans Baur, Hochenschildt's 'good neighbour', was interrogated by the commission about the harm allegedly done by Knab to both her daughter and her servant girl, and three other alleged victims of Knab's malevolence were brought before the commissioners.[112] For three of the first eight acts of harmful witchcraft against persons outside Knab's own household therefore no witness was called, although at least one of the 'victims', Jacob Rabel, would have been able to testify.[113] The documentation for Knab's interrogation seems to be complete as it consists of a list of the denunciations made against her (compiled before her arrest), the entire interrogation transcript (fifty folio sheets written on both sides), an abstract of the malevolent witchcraft to which she had confessed, the witnesses' depositions, and the *relatio*, as well as the briefer verdict which was copied into the "Urfehdebuch" with a note of the sentence.[114] In none of this material is it suggested that witnesses were later subpoenaed to testify to the seven remaining occasions of harmful magic, although all of the alleged victims were alive and resident in Eichstätt at the time.[115]

The lack of thoroughness on the part of the witch commissioners in pursuing corroborative testimony for the acts of malevolent witchcraft seems to have originated in the relatively low level of importance they ascribed to such acts. Their inclusion was necessary only to help confirm the suspect's heresy and to fulfil the criteria of the *Carolina*. One can see this in the *relatio* produced at the end of the Knab case. The

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[112] Ibid., Items 8 and 9.

[113] Jacob Rabel was arrested for witchcraft in 1626 and executed on 20 November 1626, DiöAE, "Urfehdebuch", f. 228v. His first wife Barbara had been executed on 15 March 1619, ibid., ff. 169r–170r and 174r–v. There is no suggestion in the transcript of his interrogation that he had moved away from Eichstätt in the intervening period, StAN, Hexenakten 43 (J. Rabel).

[114] StAN, Hexenakten 45 (W. Knab—trial transcript), (W. Knab—*malefacta*), (W. Knab—*inquisition*), (W. Knab—*relatio*), StAN, Hexenakten 49 (Knab—denunciatory), and DiöAE, "Urfehdebuch", ff. 196v–197r.

[115] The addresses (street names or residential quarters) of individuals named in the interrogation transcripts were frequently given in the text together with a note of their death if this was relevant. Often, because of the dynamics of the Eichstätt persecution from 1617, individuals appeared as victims, accomplices and defendants in the Hexenakten. There exists therefore a lot of scattered data about the inhabitants of the principality.

malevolence was reduced in this document to a single point without any indication of how many of the nineteen acts to which Knab had confessed were accepted as part of the final testimony: 'She received ointment and powder from her paramour, by whom she was earnestly commanded and strongly encouraged to do diverse harm'.[116] The stress in this point on the role of the paramour in guiding Knab's malevolence reflects the emphasis of the *relatio*. The five folio sides on which the final summarized confession was recorded concern primarily the heretical acts of the witch, the seduction, the pact, the renunciation of God and the Catholic sacraments and the nocturnal gatherings. This emphasis on heretical acts is most notable in the attention given to the acts of sacrilege. When Knab was interrogated, only two half-day sessions were given over to an investigation of her sacrilege, and the details, which were stereotypical in form and expression, occupy just two-and-a-half of the 100 folio sides of the interrogation transcript.[117] They were copied into the *relatio* in detail and there take up about three-quarters of a folio side giving it a final significance out of proportion to the rest of the Knab's actual deposition.[118] The commissioners' central concern with the acts of heresy and their treatment of acts of harm as merely a by-product of that heresy probably accounts for their half-hearted attempts to question all the available witnesses to the crimes committed by Knab and their evident unwillingness to pursue in detail the insufficient testimony which was offered.

The responses of the witnesses to the interrogators' questions in the case of Walburga Knab were typical of those given in other cases. None of the four witnesses who did appear in this case cited witchcraft as the cause of their misfortunes. In general, witnesses do not seem from their answers to have been asked leading questions about witchcraft, although they would have known that they had been called to give evidence against one of the witch-suspects then held in the town hall. The witnesses probably did not know whose case they were being asked to discuss and this may have discouraged them from naming as a malefactor one of the several individuals who may then have been under investigation, but it would not necessarily have prevented at least some of them from blaming witchcraft for the harm they or their relations

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[116] StAN, Hexenakten 45 (W. Knab—*relatio*), f. 1v.

[117] StAN, Hexenakten 45 (W. Knab), 6 August 1621 (a.m.) (when *malefacta* were also discussed) and 6 August 1621 (p.m.).

[118] StAN, Hexenakten 45 (W. Knab—*relatio*), ff. 2r–v.

and employees had endured or from blaming a witch who had already been executed. Even when there was only one suspect being held in the town hall, witnesses tended not to tell stories of the misfortune they may have suffered at the hands of that individual. This was the case with the witnesses brought in to testify to the witchcraft done by Maria Mayr in May 1619; not one represented a clear-cut confirmation of her narrative.[119] If the majority of witnesses were unable to recall quickly in these circumstances an episode of conflict which might have led a specific individual to resort to witchcraft then the connection between enmity and the malevolent avenging witch does not seem to have resonated very strongly either in their minds or in the local culture generally. In the one case in which two of the witnesses were definitely aware of the identity of the witch (Christoph Lauterer) against whom they were meant to be testifying, they did duly cite dealings with him in their depositions. In their statements, however, they did not attribute their misfortunes to witchcraft or accuse Lauterer of being a witch.[120]

The deposition of the husband of one of Knab's alleged victims, the Uhrmacherin, reveals more clearly how the witness interrogations might have progressed. The clockmaker Hans Alter began his deposition by stating that his wife had been ill four years ago, that everyone thought that it was the 'dry fever', but that she had recovered.[121] Alter then told the witch commissioners of his wife's ulcerated leg which had first flared up in the winter before last, and caused her much pain over the recent winter.[122] It was only this second story of illness that partially matched Knab's claim to have caused the Uhrmacherin's 'bad leg'.[123] Either both events were sufficiently memorable to be brought to the interrogators' attention, or they had asked a more specific question about the Uhrmacherin's health after Alter's first story. It seems, however, that Alter was initially asked only to describe illnesses which had afflicted his wife in recent years. The witch commissioners were seeking independent and unprompted confirmation of Knab's confes-

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[119] The last executions had taken place on 15 March 1619 (DiöAE, "Urfehdebuch", ff. 169r–174v). The next four witches to be executed (on 23 November 1619) had yet to be arrested, ibid., ff. 175v–178v.

[120] StAN, Hexenakten 49 (C. Lauterer—*inquisition*). These instances will be discussed below.

[121] StAN, Hexenakten 45 (W. Knab—*inquisition*), Item 4.

[122] Ibid., Item 4.

[123] StAN, Hexenakten 45 (W. Knab), 5 August 1621 and (W. Knab—*malefacta*), Item 4.

sion from Alter and the other witnesses. In this case, they were first told an irrelevant tale before they were offered a story of an illness which could fit the harm claimed by Knab.

Knab stated explicitly that in this case she had acted out of enmity against the Uhrmacherin.[124] She did not state her motivation for any of the other twelve attacks on her neighbours for whom witnesses were found. It is possible therefore that tension had once characterized Knab's relationship with Frau Alter, but this unidentified conflict does not appear to have impressed both parties equally. For Knab, forced to describe acts of malevolence, the Uhrmacherin's 'bad leg' and the memory of a dispute with her provided the raw material for a plausible narrative of harmful magic, even if the underlying problem had been resolved. Difficult relations with Frau Alter may also have been the reason why Knab later named her among her alleged accomplices.[125] Hans Alter, however, does not seem to have made a connection between this apparent tension and either of his wife's illnesses which he described for the witch commission. If there had been conflict of sufficient gravity to disrupt relations between the Knabs and Alters, it is likely that Hans Alter would have been aware of this. The early modern household was a unit whose honour, and therefore prosperity, would have been affected by disputes involving either spouse, and whose defence would have relied on communication between its members. If there was a significant source of tension between Knab and Alter it would probably have been discussed in the clockmaker's home. It would also have been difficult for Hans Alter to have remained deaf to local gossip which would have encompassed such disputes, or to have been so oblivious, after four years of renewed witch persecution in the town, to the activities of the witch commission as to not have speculated on the possible malicious intervention of witches in the lives of his family members. Possibly he was discouraged by fear of naming the wrong person or by the witch's potential for revenge given the right opportunity. It seems more likely, however, that the dispute had not been significant and had been resolved without causing long-term resentment on either

[124] 'She scattered her powder out of enmity towards the people, and then her neighbour received a bad leg this past winter', StAN, Hexenakten 45 (W. Knab), 5 August 1621. It is possible to read this sentence from Knab's confession as a general hatred for the people of Eichstätt. In the abstracted *malefacta*, however, the Uhrmacherin is explicitly described as Knab's 'enemy', StAN, Hexenakten 45 (W. Knab—*malefacta*), Item 4.

[125] StAN, Hexenakten 45 (W. Knab), 9 August 1621 (p.m.).

side. Knab's recollection of the episode merely suited her narrative purposes at that point in her interrogation.

Christoph Lauterer

Fear of the witch did not deter Leonhard Steissl and Margaretha Mos from providing testimony against the *Bürgermeister* Christoph Lauterer on 5 November 1629, just five days before his execution.[126] These two witnesses knew who they were brought in to testify against and probably why. They stood before members of the witch commission who would, by this late stage in the persecutions, have been known to most inhabitants of Eichstätt. Mos was the stepsister of Lauterer's first wife, and both she and Steissl mentioned Lauterer by name in their statements, although neither of them cited witchcraft in their depositions.[127] Steissl's story of purchasing some pigs from Lauterer also matched that recounted by the defendant. Both men stated that the sale had taken place twelve or thirteen years ago. They agreed that the pigs had turned out to be little more than 'Unrat' ('refuse', i.e. virtually worthless), and that a reduction in the price originally paid for them had been negotiated.[128] The one significant difference between the two versions was the claim by Lauterer that he had bewitched the pigs by means of a spell (which he recited for the witch commissioners), and the corresponding lack of reference to witchcraft by Steissl.[129] The similarities in vocabulary and detail between the two testimonies are striking. In other cases witnesses had told stories which might seem, at least to the interrogators, to corroborate the suspects' original confessions, but they were frequently sketchy or vague or they included variations on the details presented by the defendant. Hans Alter, as I have shown, was given two opportunities on which to tell a story of his wife's illness that sufficiently resembled Knab's version of her harmful magic.[130] Lorenz Buebel provided details of his wife's poorly leg which could have been the affliction to which Knab had referred in her original testimony, but he used a different vocabulary—the 'bösen

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[126] StAN, Hexenakten 49 (C. Lauterer—*inquisition*), ff. 1r–v.
[127] Ibid., ff. 1r–v.
[128] Ibid., f. 1r, and (C. Lauterer—*malefacta*), Item 2.
[129] StAN, Hexenakten 49 (C. Lauterer—*malefacta*), Item 2, and (Lauterer—*inquisition*), f. 1r.
[130] StAN, Hexenakten 45 (W. Knab—*inquisition*), Item 4.

schenckl' ('bad leg') described by Knab became an 'offen' ('ulcerated') one in Buebel's testimony—and he offered additional detail (it had happened when she was in childbed).[131] In Frau Baur's account of her daughter's illness, she stated that the child had suffered three-quarters of a year ago. Even allowing for the month between Knab's confession and Baur's deposition, that was much further in the past than the seven weeks alleged by the suspect.[132]

In the witness testimony elicited against Lauterer too, other deponents than Steissl were unable to recount exactly the same detail as given by the defendant. Lauterer claimed that six years previously he had killed Michael Sax's sixteen-year-old daughter, Kunigunda, who was then in the service of Lauterer's late sister.[133] Sax stated that five years ago his daughter Brigitta, aged fifteen, had died after helping at the wedding of the castellan of Dolnstein. She had then been in the service of the late Thobia Hörman who was, although Sax did not mention it, Lauterer's brother-in-law.[134] It is not clear whether he was married to the same sister referred to in Lauterer's confession. Georg Hörman, Thobia's brother, then testified that their sister Maria had died several years ago, but he did not know the cause because he did not note such things.[135] He had not entertained the possibility that his sister's death had been brought on by the poisoned goat's milk with which Lauterer claimed to have caused the spasms which killed the girl whose name, incidentally, he could not remember exactly.[136] In no other deposition than that recorded for Steissl did a witness repeat the story almost exactly as it had been told by the defendant. The interrogators may therefore have elicited Steissl's testimony by getting him to confirm a story which they were quoting from their summary of Lauterer's confession, or he may have been led by the interrogators' questions to tell of this particular episode. The problem with the pigs should not, however, be interpreted as causing long-term conflict

[131] StAN, Hexenakten 45 (W. Knab), 5 August 1621, and (Knab—*inquisition*), Item 5.
[132] StAN, Hexenakten 45 (W. Knab—*inquisition*), Item 8, (W. Knab), 5 August 1621, and (W. Knab—*malefacta*), Item 8.
[133] StAN, Hexenakten 49 (C. Lauterer—*malefacta*), Item 7.
[134] StAN, Hexenakten 49 (C. Lauterer—*inquisition*), ff. 1v–2r.
[135] Ibid., f. 2r, What Maria died of 'he does not know, because he did not note such things at the time'.
[136] StAN, Hexenakten 49 (C. Lauterer—*malefacta*), Item 5: '[he] does not know whether it was called Maria or Magdalena'.

between Lauterer and Steissl. It had happened a long time ago and had been resolved by the reduction in the sale-price. Neither Steissl nor Lauterer suggested that they had been unhappy with the renegotiated settlement. When pressured into telling stories of his malevolence, the episode of the useless swine, memorable in itself, probably came to Lauterer's mind as one which could conveniently be diabolized. This was the process by which the story of the pigs entered Lauterer's confession narrative and his name came, unusually, to be included in one particular witness's deposition.

Conclusion

In the Eichstätt context, Knab's claim to have acted out of enmity towards the Uhrmacherin was atypical. There is no evidence in either the other witch-suspects' confessions of harmful magic or the witness testimonies that personal tensions strained the fabric of the local community. Indeed, I will continue to argue in the following chapters that collectively the defendants' stories, interpreted as reminiscences of local history, reveal a relatively stable community. It is also curious that, although each suspect was asked explicitly whether she or he had acted out of enmity in naming their fellow heretics, the scribes only rarely recorded the suspects' answers. One might even conclude that the witch commissioners regularly failed to put the question. In only one case, again that of Walburga Knab, were the suspect's comments on her relationships with two of her accomplices noted, other than to confirm that they were or were not witches. Knab claimed not to have denounced the clergymen Herr Vogel and the parish dean out of enmity.[137] Unfortunately, it is not clear why Knab stated this about these two ecclesiastics or why, if the standard questionnaire had been followed at this point in the interrogation, the scribe recorded her answers in these two instances only. To confess to enmity with a possible accomplice was to cast doubt on one's accusation, but whether Knab meant to validate her denunciations in these cases by denying enmity one cannot now tell.

With these ambiguous statements about Knab's relationships with Vogel and the parish dean one encounters a problem inherent in all of

[137] StAN, Hexenakten 45 (W. Knab), 11 August 1621 (p.m.).

the suspects' observations about the neighbours whom they mentioned during the course of their interrogations: only their opinions were recorded. For the most part, these assessments remain uncorroborated and they may, given the circumstances in which they were produced, have served a strategic purpose for the narrator. It is possible, however, to begin to read between the lines of what the suspects said about their neighbours. In conjunction with other evidence, particularly the witness statements, this process would seem to support the view that, generally, Eichstätt was not riven by insuperable endemic or paradigmatic tensions. The stories told by the witch-defendants and discussed in the following chapters confirm that the population of the principality was characterized by social cohesion rather than disruption.

CHAPTER FOUR

FOOD AND DRINK

Margretha Bittelmayr's first attempt to construct a seduction narrative and Michael Hochenschildt's comments on his relationship with Hans Baur were placed in the context of shared meals or drink. This idiom of shared meals recurs throughout the Eichstätt witch-trial transcripts: in descriptions of the circumstances in which sacrilege occurred; in the details of the witches' emptying of cellars; and in the accounts of their nocturnal gatherings. It is also possible to identify other relational idioms in the stories told by the defendants. One finds episodes of diabolical seduction mediated by idioms of sexual intercourse (fornication, adultery and prostitution), and accounts of harm by idioms of medical practice (midwifery and folk medicine). Beneath the gloss of demonology imposed by the witch commissioners, one can identify narratives of communal or social activity which evoke the same intimacy one encounters in the suspects' direct assessments of the state of their relationships with their denouncers and in their responses to direct confrontations with fellow witch-suspects.

The suspects whose narratives will be the subject of this chapter and the two which follow were not responding defensively to their denouncers' accusations in an attempt to emphasize their innocence and piety. They were constructing stories which were designed to supply the details required by the witch commissioners and they were doing so after they had confessed to being witches. The social content of these narratives was therefore incidental to the diabolical content of the confessions as a whole; it was supplied to ground the fantastic stories of witchcraft activity in a plausible reality. The narratives were given substance by the local knowledge and gossip from which they were constructed. They also reveal the failure of local attempts to impose the tenets and decrees of the Catholic Reformation on all sections of secular society in a bishopric which has been regarded as a bulwark, geographically, politically and spiritually, of Tridentine Catholicism.

Food and drink

During his interrogation, the cobbler Valtin Lanng confessed to the witch commissioners that he had poisoned the beer and wine of up to six companions whom he had entertained in his house.[1] His narrative contains two versions of the first cases of such poisoning. Dr Hebich and the *Hausmeister* had been drinking with Lanng and become ill. As Lanng observed initially this was because they had been drinking until two o'clock in the morning and when they left, presumably quite drunk, it was cold; it was the weather which had made the two men ill.[2] In the second version of this story retold under duress, Lanng confessed that he had intended to kill Dr Hebich by poisoning his drink, but he had only succeeded in making him ill. The *Hausmeister* had drunk some of the drink intended for Hebich, but had not also become ill.[3] Whilst this story is about harm between neighbours, neither enmity nor witchcraft were mentioned in its telling (or, in fact, in Lanng's other tales of poisoning); nor did the witch commissioners attempt to get to the bottom of the obvious inconsistency in the narrative, the limited efficacy of the poison. The first version of the story, because it was a voluntary rather than a guided answer to the interrogators' questions, seems the most likely and here one is confronted with associations between men similar to that which Hochenschildt was later to describe between himself and both Hans Baur, his good neighbour, and Lorenz Brandt, his drinking companion. Interestingly, Baur was also named early in Lanng's very long list of fellow witches, suggesting that their relationship came readily to mind under duress.[4] One of Lanng's other drinking partners was the court saddler, the same saddler whom Hans Stigeliz stated, a decade later, drank with Georg Silbereis.[5] These coincidences suggest that a feature of male friendship among members of the social elite in Eichstätt, whether it was casual or intimate, was the sharing of drink, often quite a lot of drink, on many occasions in one's own home. What Lanng seems to have done in this case is to diabolize,

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[1] StAN, Hexenakten 48 (V. Lanng), 11 May 1618 (a.m.).
[2] Ibid., 11 May 1618 (a.m.).
[3] Ibid., 29 August 1618 (a.m.). The interrogators returned to this story to make it fit Lanng's narrative. Having extracted the names of another twenty-two accomplices from him, they asked him if he remembered what he had said about Hebich and the *Hausmeister*. He did.
[4] Number 4 of over 230, StAN, Hexenakten 48 (V. Lanng), 9 May 1618 (p.m.).
[5] Ibid., 11 May 1618 (a.m.); and StAN, Hexenakten 45 (H. Stigeliz), 25 May 1628.

or at least make criminal, ordinary drinking sessions. In doing so he revealed his personal close associations with several men, all from the same political and craft milieu: apart from those mentioned, Jobst (a fellow cobbler), the brewer Georg Pitelmayr and the *Brettmeister* (probably a paymaster of some kind).

Lanng was not asked at this point in his interrogation to comment specifically on his relationships with a list of named individuals provided by the witch commissioners. He was not therefore in a position to state explicitly that these men were his 'good neighbours'. In the context of early modern social behaviour, however, such a statement was unnecessary. Drinking bonded people and especially specific groups of men together. B. Ann Tlusty has argued that drinking traditions, especially as they centred on the tavern in urban communities, shaped and maintained social identity and personal honour.[6] Drinking rituals, their symbolic significance, and the violence which might be associated with them have also been described by Lyndal Roper in *Oedipus and the Devil*.[7] And Alan Bray and Michel Rey have observed that sharing meals was a public display of friendship.[8] In each of these studies, drinking and eating symbolized the unity of the guild or the sealing of business and marriage deals. These shared occasions were public and functional; they gave witnesses a visual referent in future disputes between craftsmen, businessmen or families. Conversely, as Jonas Liliequist and David Sabean have shown, the public symbolic refusal to share meals or drink could have devastating consequences, marking out a person as dishonourable or unprofessional.[9] One might, however, extend these analyses beyond the public symbolism of shared drinking.

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[6] Tlusty, *Bacchus and Civic Order*, pp. 209–12.

[7] Roper, "Drinking, Whoring and Gorging", and "Blood and Codpieces: Masculinity in the Early Modern German Town", in ead., *Oedipus and the Devil*, pp. 107–24 (pp. 110–13).

[8] Bray and Rey, "The Body of the Friend", pp. 69–70.

[9] Jonas Liliequist, "Peasants against Nature: Crossing the Boundaries between Man and Animal in Seventeenth- and Eighteenth-Century Sweden", in John C. Fout (ed.), *Forbidden History: The State, Society and the Regulation of Sexuality in Modern Europe* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), pp. 57–87, in which he offers a series of examples of neighbours refusing to share drinks and meals with suspected 'buggers' of animals (pp. 68–9). Much of the conflict between the Württemberg pastor Georg Gottfrid Bregenzer and his parishioners centred on inappropriate conduct in taverns or at public gatherings in people's houses, Sabean, "Blasphemy, Adultery and Persecution: Paranoia in the Pulpit (1696–1710)", in id., *Power in the Blood*, pp. 113–43. As Richard Evans has shown, the dishonourable status of the executioner also meant that he was generally excluded from full participation in tavern culture and public meals, *Rituals of Retribution*, p. 58.

The drinking and eating described by Hochenschildt and Lanng were done in private. They had symbolic meanings only for the participants because there were no witnesses other than them. Bray and Rey noted of the great hall table rituals, whether in colleges or in great houses, that 'Gestures of this kind did more than indicate bonds of friendship, as a signpost might indicate a town: they created them'.[10] The eating and drinking described by Hochenschildt and Lanng, and one might add Margretha Bittelmayr with her female companions prior to the wedding in Weißenkirch, were extensions of this public display. The individuals they ate and drank with in these private circumstances came from the same social milieu as themselves, that is, they were people with whom they would normally feast in public. If these public occasions created friendship in the formal terms defined by Bray and Rey, those individuals chosen for more intimate conviviality should, I think, be regarded as friends in the looser, informal sense reserved for that term today. The friendships created on the basis of status, profession and political responsibility in public were taken by choice into the private world of the household. What the private instances of drinking did was to sustain and deepen friendship. In this context, the stories of poisoning by Lanng seem all the more false and unlikely. In other circumstances he would probably have stated that some or all of his drinking companions were his 'good neighbours'.

One finds scattered references to similar domestic occasions as Lanng's late-night drinking sessions in the descriptions of diabolical seduction and sacrilege given by some of the witch-suspects. A male suspect, probably Hans Wagner, gave four different accounts of his seduction into the witch sect. Three of these were conventional: in the first, the Devil appeared to him on his return from Regensburg; he then confessed that a young woman had come to him on his bed; but in the third it was the Devil again who had seduced him into the sect as he returned from Dillingen. Finally, he confessed that his mother and the Biler Madel whom he had once loved seduced him into their company in the parlour of his mother's house.[11] Also in the room were his maternal aunt Afra, Michael Maÿerin (that is, the wife of Michael Maÿer),

[10] Bray and Rey, "The Body of the Friend", p. 70.

[11] StAN, Hexenakten 48 (H. Wagner?), 16 May 1618 (a.m.). These successive stories were produced under torture as the interrogators sought a convincing narrative of seduction which would presumably also fit with the data about when other convicted witches said they had first seen him at a diabolical gathering.

another Maÿerin from Weißenkirch, two carters (although the suspect could not confirm that they were witches), and the Stelzer Barbel.[12] Immediately after the seduction, this suspect was baptized. The baptism is similar to that of Barbara Haubner at Anna Spät's house as well as, for example, the baptism of Georg Gutmann which had taken place in his mother's bedroom.[13] The baptisms involved one's family or close associates, in this case, a mother, an aunt, a lover, a few gossips (perhaps the mother's friends) and two carters (colleagues of Hans Wagner if he was the suspect under interrogation, as seems likely). If one removes the diabolical elements of this tale of seduction, the occasion is simply mundane. No one is out of place. The suspect has described a scene which was probably repeated many times in this parlour, a scene in which family, friends and guests partook of one woman's hospitality.

Two of the acts of sacrilege about which Barbara Apotheker claimed knowledge happened against the background of a central feature of such hospitality, the sharing of a meal: the first at Moringer's house with Barbara Höning (the Forstmeisterin), Juden Wolf's wife and the Schweizer Casparin (Barbara Rabel); the second at Sebastian Beckin's (that is, Anna Beck's) house with Metzger Michlin.[14] In both cases, however, the meal and the sacrilege were not directly equated with each other. On the first occasion Apotheker had merely given the host to Rabel, but she could not say to what use Rabel might have put it.[15] There is no reference at all to the host in her second description of a meal and we only know that it had something to do with dishonouring the eucharist because it comes immediately after the first description and before she confessed that she had once given the host to her paramour in a section entitled 'Sacrilegia'.[16]

It is not clear why Apotheker set her acts of sacrilege against the background of a meal. Every witch-suspect was asked where such acts had taken place, but, whilst several suspects stated that they had occurred at someone's house—Enders Gutmann, for example, helped desecrate the host in his mother's bedroom (where his brother Georg

[12] Ibid., 16 May 1618 (a.m.).
[13] StAN, Hexenakten 48 (B. Haubner), 23 January 1618 (a.m.), and (G. Gutmann), 29 January 1618 (a.m.).
[14] StAN, Hexenakten 48 (B. Apotheker), 19 February 1620 (a.m.).
[15] Ibid., 19 February 1620 (a.m.).
[16] Again, Apotheker stated that she did not know to what use the sacrament had been put, ibid., 19 February 1620 (a.m.).

had been baptized) with her gossips[17]—few chose to describe a routine domestic scene against which to set the narrative of sacrilegious behaviour. Some, like Margretha Bittelmayr, even placed the act well away from their neighbours' homes. She attended an act of sacrilege on the Schotenwiesen, to the east of the town of Eichstätt and a location cited by almost every witch-defendant as a place commonly used for their nocturnal gatherings.[18] It is possible that Apotheker had taken up the central physical characteristic of the eucharist, the ingestion of the host, which was emphasized by the need for heretics to spit it out in order to retain it for criminal purposes. She might also have made the simple connection between the Last Supper at which Christ first broke the bread and the sharing of meals with her own companions.

Four of the women with whom she ate these meals had, like Bittelmayr's wedding companions (of whom Apotheker may have been one), already been executed for witchcraft, and a fifth was executed in the following October.[19] Like Bittelmayr and her companions, these women also shared significant characteristics of residence and class. All six women with whom Apotheker had shared her meals were inhabitants of the town of Eichstätt and they had married into its secular elite: Apotheker and Rabel, as I have already discussed, were married to butchers; Metzger Michlin was possibly a butcher's wife, although Apollonia Metzger (who may even have been Metzger Michlin), who was executed in November 1619, was a brewer's wife;[20] Juden Wolf was, according to Apotheker, a miller;[21] Beck was the wife of the baker by St. Sebastian's church in Eichstätt;[22] Moringer's husband was a *Bürgermeister*;[23] and Barbara Höning's a councillor holding a position

[17] These gossips included Anna Bonschab, Barbara Khager and Wappel Weber, as well as Khager's son Michael Ghayer and Enders' brother Georg, StAN, Hexenakten 48 (E. Gutmann), 12 January 1618 (a.m.).

[18] StAN, Hexenakten 45 (M. Bittelmayr), 26 October 1626.

[19] Beck, Rabel and Moringer had all been executed in 1618, DiöAE, "Urfehdebuch", ff. 148v–150r, 169r–170r and 173r–174v. It has not been possible to identify who the Metzger Michlin was. She is recorded in Apotheker's testimony as 'The executed Mezger Michlin', StAN, Hexenakten 48 (B. Apotheker), 19 February 1620 (a.m.). Barbara Höning was to be executed on 10 October 1620, DiöAE, "Urfehdebuch", ff. 188v–189r. I have not been able to identify Juden Wolf's wife either. She is not recorded as 'executed' in Apotheker's testimony.

[20] DiöAE, "Urfehdebuch", ff. 177r–178v.

[21] StAN, Hexenakten 48 (B. Apotheker), 19 February 1620 (a.m.).

[22] StAN, Hexenakten 48 (A. Beck), 23 January 1618.

[23] DiöAE, "Urfehdebuch", f. 173r.

as one of the masters of the forest.[24] They may also have been of a similar age. Rabel was fifty-three and Apotheker about forty-five at the time of their arrests.[25]

Barbara Rabel was also Barbara Apotheker's sister-in-law by marriage. Rabel took her nickname, the Schweizer Casparin, from her first husband, Kaspar Kiermaier, a councillor of Eichstätt.[26] In August 1603, she married Jacob Apotheker, the widowed son of the court butcher, who was then himself the court butcher and also a tavernkeeper.[27] Sometime after Jacob's death in August 1606, and the subsequent birth of their son, also Jacob, in March 1607, the Schweizer Casparin married Jacob Rabel, a tavernkeeper in Eichstätt.[28] She was executed for witchcraft in 1618; Jacob Rabel followed in November 1626.[29] Barbara Apotheker had married Adam, Jacob Apotheker's brother, in 1592.[30] Subsequently, Adam and Barbara had appointed members of two families which were later found to include witches (Richard and Anna Romen and Melchior and Anna Bonschab) godparents to their children.[31] Barbara Rabel and Barbara Apotheker would presumably have attended some or all of these last baptisms with each other, together with the various funerals of deceased infants and other relatives as well as weddings and other social gatherings. This is all the more likely when one considers that the population of the town of Eichstätt was at most only 4500 and probably less at this time, and that between 1589 and

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[24] StAN, Hexenakten 48 (B. Apotheker), 19 February 1620 (a.m.).

[25] StAN, Hexenakten 48 (B. Rabel), 6 September 1618 (p.m.), and (B. Apotheker), 3 February 1620 (a.m.). Anna Beck had been about forty-five when she was arrested, (A. Beck), 23 January 1618.

[26] StAN, Hexenakten 48 (B. Rabel), 6 September 1618 (p.m.). This detail is confirmed in Buchner, "Eichstätter Familienbuch", p. 41.

[27] The date of the marriage, Jacob's marital status and his other occupation as a tavernkeeper are given in ibid., p. 41.

[28] StAN, Hexenakten 48 (B. Rabel), 6 September 1618 (p.m.), and Buchner, "Eichstätter Familienbuch", p. 41. With Jacob Apotheker she had two children called Jacob. The first was born in March 1606 and died in infancy. Jacob's profession is given as *Weinschenk*.

[29] DiöAE, "Urfehdebuch", ff. 169r–170r, 174r–v, and 228v.

[30] StAN, Hexenakten 48 (B. Apotheker), 3 February 1620 (a.m.), and Buchner, "Eichstätter Familienbuch", p. 41.

[31] Richard and Anna Romen stood as godparents to the Apothekers' first six children, and Melchior and Anna Bonschab to the last six, Buchner, "Eichstätter Familienbuch", p. 41. Apotheker herself claimed to have had thirteen children, but one is not to be found in any other record, StAN, Hexenakten 48 (B. Apotheker), 3 February 1620 (a.m.).

1616 there were about forty-five marriages a year in the larger of the two town parishes, Unsere Liebe Frau.[32]

Against this familial background, Apotheker's presentation of the stolen host to Rabel during the first meal she described under the heading 'Sacrilegia' takes on a new significance. It was, in a sense, a gift between sisters. Given the context of witch persecution, the dominant historiographical emphasis on the social (dys)function of witchcraft episodes and the familial relationship between the two women, one might be tempted to interpret this story as a version of the Snow White fairy tale. In this version, the evil stepmother/witch and her innocent stepdaughter are replaced by two sisters-in-law, but the exchange of food still poisons. Rather than killing, however, the host corrupts the soul and endangers it with the prospect of eternal damnation. But this is not the same story. Remove the diabolical emphasis imposed by the interrogators and think of the host simply as food and the exchange becomes much more mundane; the hostess has merely fed her guest, probably a fairly common one, at her table.

Of the other guests at Apotheker's table, Barbara Höning was the third wife of Martin Höning, a former steward of the 'New College' (probably St. Willibald's College) in Eichstätt.[33] Among the witnesses to their marriage were the later witch Hans Stigeliz and Daniel Moringer, relative of two witches (Apotheker's companion Eva Susanna and Anastasia).[34] Incidentally, the witnesses to Martin Höning's two previous marriages included the male witch Michael Girtenstihl, and Thoma Nagelmayr, father of the witch Maria Mayr;[35] Maria Mayr's mother was also a representative for the godparents of Maria Höning, Martin and Barbara's sixth child born in October 1615.[36] Again one glimpses the dense inter-relations between members of the Eichstätt citizenry of which Apotheker, as wife of the court butcher and by her age, was

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[32] Buchner, "Eichstätter Familienbuch", p. 6. There were 1250 marriages between 1589 and 1616 in this parish. There were also 235 between 1597 and 1618 in the parish of St. Walburg.

[33] Ibid., p. 167.

[34] Ibid., p. 167. Cf. StAN, Hexenakten 45 (H. Stigeliz). Eva Susanna and Anastasia were executed in 1619 and 1623 respectively, DiöAE, "Urfehdebuch", ff. 173r–174v and 210v–211r.

[35] Buchner, "Eichstätter Familienbuch", p. 167. The date of Girtenstihl's execution is not known. He certainly confronted Michael Hochenschildt with the denunciation he had made under interrogation, StAN, Hexenakten 45 (M. Hochenschildt), 15 March 1628 (a.m.). Maria Mayr's case is the subject of Chapter 7.

[36] Buchner, "Eichstätter Familienbuch", p. 167.

a senior member. She was also brought to trial relatively late. This would suggest that suspicions had not attached themselves to her, or were ignored by the witch commissioners, until the final wave of witch persecution was well underway. It is difficult to imagine that she was an outcast from her group of family and friends and was excluded from their social gatherings. I would again argue, therefore, that, like Bittelmayr, Apotheker was recreating actual events, shared meals. In doing so she did not arbitrarily populate her narrative with any convicted witch whom she could remember, but selected those whom she could imagine or recall eating or celebrating with.

Some of the witches' descriptions of their entries into cellars reveal similar complex networks of kinship and friendship. The cellars under the houses in Eichstätt were substantial. Several survived the 'Schwedenbrand' of 1634 and were incorporated into the Baroque buildings which replaced the ruins; they function as restaurants and other business premises today. The testimonies of the witch-defendants would suggest that on certain ordinary occasions owners of these large cellars would invite their acquaintances and friends into them. The suspects always claimed to have entered cellars accompanied by other witches, sometimes including the cellar-owner or his wife. Paulus Danner, for example, said that he entertained a gathering of witches in his own cellar.[37] This is not at all surprising as cellars were well-known places to many Eichstätt inhabitants. Jacob Rabel and Jacob Apotheker, as I have already mentioned, were both tavernkeepers. Leonhard Bonschab, father of the witches Maria Richel and Lorenz Bonschab, and relative to a number of others, was, in addition to being a councillor and brewer, also a tavernkeeper.[38] The witch Barbara Höning was the daughter of a tavernkeeper of Titting, Johann Schilcher.[39] As business premises, cellars clearly held an important function for these individuals, as they would have done for Jacob Höring, the landlord of the 'Goldene Ochsen' in Eichstätt, or the tavernkeeper Michael Hochenschildt to give just two further examples.[40]

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[37] StAN, Hexenakten 48 (P. Danner), 7 May 1618 (a.m.).

[38] Buchner, "Eichstätter Familienbuch", p. 75. Like Rabel, Bonschab is described as a *Weinschenk*.

[39] Ibid., p. 167.

[40] On Höring, see DiöAE, "Urfehdebuch", ff. 225r–v. Hochenschildt did not describe himself thus, but this is a common description of him in the parish registers, for example, Buchner, "Eichstätter Familienbuch", pp. 176 and 374.

Other craftsmen like Valtin Lanng also had substantial cellars which they may well have used for storing the tools and products of their trades as well as wine, beer and food. Indeed, Anna Beck's confession that she had attended a gathering in Lanng's cellar provides a tentative link between the witches' apparently popular meetings in local cellars and social drinking among men.[41] The drink which Beck and her eleven female accomplices (including Lanng's wife) consumed had to be bought in, perhaps from the brewer Georg Pitelmayr, one of the alleged victims of Lanng's malevolence;[42] it would have been the same drink that Lanng had poisoned and offered to his male guests. One might also speculate that Lanng's nocturnal drinking sessions with his friends took place in the cellar rather than the parlour. The beer or wine would literally have been on tap and the secret drinkers could have hidden away from the prying eyes of the night-watchman.

The Eichstätt witch-suspects could not imagine breaking into cellars as an activity they would undertake alone. Their descriptions of it therefore contrast significantly with their narratives of malevolent witchcraft or the breaking into animal stalls or bedchambers. In the Eichstätt confessions, malevolence seems to have been personal and was undertaken by witches acting alone. Even though the witch-suspects rarely offered reasons for the harmful witchcraft to which they confessed, it seems that they understood that such acts of revenge would, had they actually been carried out, have tended to originate in animosity between individuals rather than being the object of ritual magic. This would have been partly because legal and cultural means of avenging lost honour and restoring it tended to pit one individual against another, partly because practitioners of 'low magic' broadly speaking (cunning folk, priests and midwives) tended to work on a one-to-one basis, and partly because popular stories of witchcraft episodes were usually structured in this way. There is no need to construct elaborate explanations of social paradigm shifts, or to accept as basically true the stories of conflict which appear in the witches' confession narratives, to understand the immediate cultural resonance of harmful magic. The interrogators' persistent questions about enmity would have underscored this association of animosity and malevolent witchcraft.

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[41] StAN, Hexenakten 48 (A. Beck), 6 February 1618 (a.m.).
[42] StAN, Hexenakten 48 (V. Lanng), 11 May 1618 (a.m.).

As locations of criminal activity, animal stalls and bedchambers were the opposites of the cellar. The stall was a part of the household as workplace and, unlike the cellar, it was not also used for neighbourly and communal activity. Most witch-suspects had no reason to be in their neighbours' cowsheds, pigsties or stables. To the suspects, therefore, it was inconceivable that they would have gathered there with their alleged accomplices. To many of them it was equally inconceivable that they might trespass in the stalls to harm animals. Although all of the Eichstätt witch-suspects confessed to killing the cows, pigs or horses of their neighbours, they only did so during the lengthy interrogations about the harm they caused which tended to come earlier in the trial process than the questions about animal stalls. They almost always placed these acts of malevolent witchcraft in public spaces. When the suspect confessed to harming certain animals intentionally, they implied that they did so by scattering their powder on the route along which the owner might drive his animals.[43] The acts of harm to livestock were also often represented as accidental when the animals rather than their owner, the intended victim, walked over the diabolical powder scattered by the witch-narrator.[44] In contrast, when they told stories of harm to animals in the stalls, their confessions were neither detailed nor comprehensible. Bittelmayr, for example, confessed to breaking into one cowshed and riding on the cows there which caused her to get all wet.[45] She also claimed to have broken into Hans Danner's horse-stall twice in order to 'press' his horse. In between these two acts, she testified to attacking her own cattle five times.[46]

The bedchamber was part of the household as conjugal unit. Whilst a female witch-suspect might have gained entry to it at times of childbirth or sickness, she had few other reasons to be there legitimately; priests and physicians apart, ordinary men had even fewer reasons to enter the bedchambers of others. The confessions to breaking into bedchambers were therefore as vague as those about entering animal stalls. To take Bittelmayr's testimony once more, she confessed to entering a bedroom

[43] When Walburga Knab attacked Jacob Rabel's livestock, killing a horse, she did so by strewing her powder where the animals would walk over it, StAN, Hexenakten 45 (W. Knab—*malefacta*), Item 7.

[44] Thus Margretha Bittelmayr scattered her powder in order to kill a brewer's wife, but this woman's cow walked over it instead and died, StAN, Hexenakten 45 (M. Bittelmayr), 17 October 1626.

[45] Ibid., 13 November 1626.

[46] Ibid., 13 November 1626.

only once. The victim was again Hans Danner and she tried to 'press' him.[47] It is not clear from her testimony at this point, or earlier, whether their relationship was one of enmity. Like every other witch-suspect, however, Bittelmayr was powerless in the bedroom of her victim and Danner survived. This physical impotence and the fact that the attacks which were located in the bedroom were invariably perpetrated on an adult, married member of the opposite sex seem to signify that the witch-defendants maintained a deep-seated respect for the private function of the bedchamber and the bounds of legitimate sexual relations. The only reason that Georg and Enders Gutmann were able to describe a baptism and the descration of the host in their mother's bedroom was because they had once been entitled to enter that room as children. It was a place as familiar to them as Hans Wagner's mother's parlour, for example, must have been to him. Neither of the Gutmann brothers did, however, confess to entering their mother's or another bedchamber when they were asked explicitly about entering cellars, bedrooms and animal stalls to do harm or damage. The bedroom was not, therefore, a place which they associated with ill-will. That so few suspects confessed to acts of malevolence in the bedroom shows that the population of Eichstätt was generally unable to imagine crossing the private boundaries within the household.

The contrast between the three types of break-in is emphasized further by the fact that the interrogators always asked about the suspects' activities in the cellars, stalls and bedchambers together in that sequence, and they were asked in each case who had accompanied them.[48] It was the defendants themselves therefore who distinguished between the spaces in terms of the actions performed and accomplices seen in them. They placed themselves in company in the cellars and confessed to acting alone in stalls and bedchambers. In the stalls and bedchambers they tried to harm; in the cellars the worst they ever did was have a party. Paulus Danner, for example, described one occasion when he and his fellow witches drank in his cellar after returning from a dance, as if they were continuing a celebration.[49] There is no suggestion

[47] Ibid., 13 November 1626.

[48] Although the questions about these areas were split up in the interrogatory, StAN, Hexenakten 49 (Interrogatory, fair copy), Questions 69 and 74, their vagueness meant that the interrogators merged them together. Thus Bittelmayr's testimony on these points was given in one session, StAN, Hexenakten 48 (M. Bittelmayr), 13 November 1626.

[49] StAN, Hexenakten 48 (P. Danner), 7 May 1618 (a.m.).

in his confession that Danner necessarily meant a diabolical dance. If he was describing the continuation of an ordinary celebration then one could use Danner's testimony to tie many of those witches whom I have already discussed closer together. Among the twelve accomplices who entered the cellar with Danner were the convicted witches Barbara Bonschab, Barbara Rabel, Benigna Rochner, Margretha Geiger, Hans Baur and Valtin Lanng's wife.[50] At least two others may later have been arrested for witchcraft: the Old Hezlerin (probably Margretha Hözler, executed on 24 October 1624); and the Old Zinngießerin (almost certainly Barbara Ehrenfrid who was widowed and aged about sixty when she was executed on 15 February 1620).[51] Another was Barbara Rabel's mother-in-law, and yet another may have been Hans Baur's brother or other relative.

Despite the apparent secrecy and diabolical nature of the gatherings in cellars, drunkenness, the cause of so much disorderliness in early modern Europe, is never mentioned. Similarly, wanton destruction, the Devil, fornication or any other diabolical or heretical feature of the witches' sabbaths were only rarely observed at the cellar gatherings. Barbara Haubner was one of the few suspects who placed the typical activities performed at the witches' nocturnal gatherings in the context of the drinking in the cellars. She stated that she and the six witches who entered the cellar of Ostermair's taproom 'ate and drank, danced and jumped, and also fornicated'.[52] It is not clear with whom the women fornicated as Haubner did not mention the presence of men or paramours in the cellar. Generally, however, the gatherings in the cellars hardly sound diabolical.

This impression is heightened by the quality of the accomplices named by the suspects. Danner was not the only suspect to claim to have attended a gathering which included members of the elite craft families. Bittelmayr confessed that she had attended one event with the *Bürgermeister*'s wife Egina Penner, the first accomplice identified by her a fortnight before.[53] She had attended the final gathering she described in a cellar with Silbereis's daughter, Buchbinder Wilbaldin

[50] Benigna Rochner was executed on 20 February 1621, DiöAE, "Urfehdebuch", ff. 194r–v.

[51] Ibid., ff. 218r–v and 178v–179r respectively; and StAN, Hexenakten 48 (B. Ehrenfrid), 16 November 1619 (a.m.).

[52] StAN, Hexenakten 48 (B. Haubner), 25 January 1618 (p.m.).

[53] StAN, Hexenakten 45 (M. Bittelmayr), 12 November 1626.

and Hilabrandin.[54] It is not possible to state clearly whether each of these women were of the same age as Bittelmayr. At least two, however, were married, all were resident in Eichstätt and all were of the same professional class: Georg Silbereis was the drinking companion of Valtin Lanng and the court saddler; a bookbinder was a highly skilled craftsman; and Hilabrandin was the wife of the *tabellio*, the local registrar.[55]

On the occasions when the defendants did feel the need to ground their imaginative diabolical actions in the experience of everyday life, they tended to choose situations which centred on the consumption of food and drink. The people with whom they imagined or remembered eating and drinking were not selected arbitrarily or maliciously. I now want to look at the one event in the supposed experience of all witch-heretics which forced every suspect to confess through the idiom of feasting, the nocturnal gathering.

Feasting

The first observation to make of the witches' meetings is that not one of the participants in the Eichstätt witch trials, from the witch commissioners to the suspects and witnesses, referred to them as sabbaths. However the interrogators qualified the event, with 'nocturnal' or 'diabolical', the witches of Eichstätt always attended a 'meeting' ('Zusammenkunft'), 'meal' ('Mahlzeit') or 'dance' ('Tanz').[56] There is

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[54] Ibid., 12 November 1626. This was the third of Bittelmayr's entries into a cellar. On this occasion it was the *Lebzelter*'s, that is Hans Danner's, cellar. Again, one would like to know exactly what her relationship with Danner was.

[55] Ibid., 30 October 1626. Hilabrandin (Anna Thiermayr) was married to Hilabrand Thiermayr who held several council positions including that of vice-chancellor, Hochstift Eichstätt Literalien 47, "Hofgesinde- und Beamtenbuch unter Bischöfen Moritz (1539ff.), Eberhard (1553), Martin (1561), Kaspar (1590), Johann Konrad (1595). 1539–1612 (1666)", f. 137r. She was executed on 22 December 1625, DiöAE, "Urfehdebuch", ff. 226r–v.

[56] The suspects seem to have preferred the terms 'meal' and 'dance'. They appear regularly in the answers to the interrogators' questions from the testimony of Barbara Ruoser who used both terms to describe a witches' sabbath (StAN, Hexenakten 48 (B. Ruoser), 15 December 1617 (p.m.)) to that of Michael Hochenschildt who claimed to have gone out to ninety-five dances, but only three diabolical meals (StAN, Hexenakten 45 (M. Hochenschildt), 22 March 1628). The interrogators seem to have preferred the term 'gathering'. They asked Barbara Ruoser, for example, 'Whom did she see at these diabolical gatherings?', StAN, Hexenakten 48 (B. Ruoser), 16 December 1617 (a.m.).

a distinct difference between a sabbath and these other gatherings. 'Sabbath' describes a religious occasion during which one would expect to observe rites and ceremonies; it has also been argued that sabbath, when it was used in the context of heretical gatherings, had deliberate connotations of worship by Jews as the killers of Christ.[57] Meetings, meals and dances on the other hand are more ambiguous. All sorts of groups could gather together in these ways: witches in the case of the Eichstätt trials, or the community on social occasions (baptisms, marriages, funerals, religious festivals, guild and confraternity meetings, or spinning bees). During an interrogation, this ambiguity left these terms open to deliberate or genuine misunderstanding by a suspect in her descriptions of the witches' meetings.

If the suspects said anything at all about when these gatherings took place, they tended to identify specific days and dates which corresponded to the major festivals of the Christian year, such as Easter, Christmas and Pentecost, occasions on which communal celebrations would complement the religious activities. Barbara Apotheker, for example, claimed that the gatherings took place 'at about nine o'clock on Saturday nights, Pentecost nights'.[58] As Ronald Hutton has observed, Whitsun could be a time for 'splendid' celebrations and communal processions.[59] Feasting, rather than liturgy, was the central feature of such religious occasions for the laity. It required organization and co-operation to prepare venues, food, clothing and some of the activities associated with each feast. For the community therefore a celebration consisted of much more than just a particular date on which large quantities of food and drink were consumed; the preparations as much as the feasting helped to reaffirm the social integration of the inhabitants of Eichstätt.

It is important to bear this integrative function in mind when reading the testimonies of the witch-suspects. At the nocturnal gatherings, the feast also assumes a greater importance for the defendants than the inverted liturgy of the Devil's heretical sect. There are very few references to reverencing the Devil on the anus and to torches being stuck in the backsides of old women to give light;[60] and fornication

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[57] Cohn, *Europe's Inner Demons*, p. 21.

[58] StAN, Hexenakten 48 (Barbara Apotheker), 21 February 1620 (p.m.).

[59] Ronald Hutton, *The Rise and Fall of Merry England: The Ritual Year 1400–1700* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), pp. 36–7.

[60] Enders Gutmann did confess to kissing the Devil on the backside, but this happened at the time of his seduction, not at a witches' sabbath, StAN, Hexenakten 48 (E. Gutmann), 12 January 1618 (a.m.). Margretha Bittelmayr and Wappel Weber were

was only occasionally alluded to and never described.[61] A number of witch-suspects did recall that either bread or salt were not present at the tables, but this 'memory' was triggered by a specific standard question about these items;[62] most, however, did not mention the presence or otherwise of these foodstuffs. Instead, the participants said that they ate good food, often fish (in central Europe, a staple food of festivities), and drank good wine. Barbara Ruoser, for example, claimed that the witches 'had to sit at the table. Their drinks had overflowed, and they saw a handsome meal likewise. They had roast fowl, rabbits, and also roasted children as well, and the food had a good taste.'[63] Her only concession to the conventional image of the sabbath here is the insertion of the cooked children.

It is also possible that the issue of feasting and communal gathering was on the minds of the Eichstätt citizens during the reign of Johann Christoph von Westerstetten. In the months between Johann Conrad von Gemmingen's death in November 1612 and Westerstetten's arrival in the principality in spring of the following year, there seems to have been a dispute between the clothworkers and the chancellor about their annual procession which was traditionally held at carnival. Gemmingen's government had been relaxed about such occasions as *Fastnacht*. Gemmingen seems never to have attempted to ban carnival itself, although perhaps under pressure from Bavaria, he did attempt to curb the excesses associated with it.[64] One finds, for example, a decree against mummery and Shrovetide plays issued in January 1606,[65] and

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among the few suspects to confess to torches being used in this way, StAN, Hexenakten 45 (M. Bittelmayr), 27 October 1626, and 48 (W. Weber), 3 January 1618 (a.m.).

[61] In almost all of these cases, it was merely stated that the witches 'Vnzucht getriben' ('committed fornication').

[62] The first of the suspects for whom transcripts are extant to state that the witches had bread but no salt was Valtin Lanng, StAN, Hexenakten 48 (V. Lanng), 5 May 1618 (a.m.). StAN, Hexenakten 49 (Interrogatory, fair copy), Question 46 includes the sub-question 'whether bread and salt were present'.

[63] StAN, Hexenakten 48 (B. Ruoser), 15 December 1617 (p.m.). Margretha Geiger, like so many of the witches, gave much the same description, noting that the wine was good and that they ate fish, StAN, Hexenakten 48 (M. Geiger), 28 March 1618 (a.m.).

[64] Wilhelm V certainly urged Gemmingen to support the reform in Bamberg, but the bishop's apparent policies would suggest that the duke's request was politely ignored, Hochstift Eichstätt Literalien 12c, "Schreiben von Herzog Wilhelm von Bayern an den Bischof von Eichstätt wegen der Gegenreformation in Hochstift Bamberg. 1596".

[65] Hochstift Eichstätt Literalien 59, "Kopialbuch, die unter Bischof Martin und seinen Nachfolgen erlassenen Generalbefehle und Ausschreibungen enthaltend. 1457–1626", ff. 326r–v, "Verbott der Mummereÿ vnd Fastnachtspil" (dated 22 January 1606).

a proclamation of 1611 against bearing arms during an 'authorized' *Fastnacht*, limiting the festivities to three days and forbidding the celebrations to continue beyond nine o'clock at night.[66] Westerstetten's government in contrast began with a ban on carnival in its entirety, issued in his absence.[67] The clothworkers' response was to petition the chancellor to maintain their right to their procession. Faced with this large, if not politically powerful, group, the chancellor decided to issue an exemption, for 1613 only, permitting the clothworkers to process around the town and other tradesmen to celebrate *Fastnacht*, but the restrictions imposed on the 1611 celebrations were retained.[68] Westerstetten subsequently reissued the ban in 1615.[69] Given his attitude towards reform, it is unlikely that he later authorized exceptions to this ban. There is no later record of an exemption from this legislation for the clothworkers.

It seems therefore that the families of the men of the *Hofrat* and other local councils had been thinking about feasting, gathering and their moral consequences in the period immediately prior to the witch persecutions. Their thoughts had probably been sustained by attempts to lecture the citizens on the immorality of carnival and similar occasions from the pulpit as a supplement to Westerstetten's decrees. The chancellor had also been concerned that the exceptional celebration of 1613 should not become violent (hence the ban on weapons) or continue into the night, as seems to have been common for such gatherings throughout Europe, notably in Romans in 1580.[70] These concerns were indirectly reflected in the witch commissioners' conception of the congregations of the witch sect, at once disorderly and nocturnal. The clothworkers and other tradesmen on the other hand were no doubt exercised by the denial of a procession that they had considered a right. When asked to think about the sabbaths, the Eichstätt witch-suspects, who were mainly drawn from professional and craft households, may well have concentrated on those aspects which

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[66] Ibid., f. 341r, "Verkündigung der ohne wehr vnd waffen zuegelassenen Fastnacht ao 1611. Jedoch lenger nit alß vff 3 tag vnd daß Nachts biß vff 9 Vren inclusive".

[67] Ibid., f. 349v, "Verbott der Fastnacht alhie zu Eÿstett…1613".

[68] Ibid., f. 350r, "Erlaubtnuß der Fastnacht alhie zu Eÿstett Anno 1613" (dated 18 February 1613).

[69] Ibid., ff. 365r–v, "Benewal beuelch den etliche deß Stiffts Ämter die ao 1615 verbottene Faßnacht bet".

[70] On Romans, see Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie, *Carnival in Romans: A People's Uprising at Romans 1579–1580*, trans. Mary Feeney (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1981).

they missed in the banned communal gatherings: the feasting, dancing, drinking and gossip. It seems unlikely that they would have been concerned about the darkness which was supposed to characterize the witches' convents. The nine o'clock curfew imposed by the chancellor in 1613 highlights the tendency for such events to carry on into the night. At *Fastnacht* especially the prolonged drinking and dancing would probably have been one of the attractions.

Descriptions of feasting at the nocturnal gatherings were in fact much more orderly than one would expect from demonological tracts, pictorial representations and an obsession among historians for accentuating the few heretical, diabolical or lewd elements of a testimony almost to the exclusion of the more numerous ordinary details. As she named each of her thirty accomplices with whom she had attended the gatherings of the witch sect, Margretha Bittelmayr described what they had done there. Almost all 'ate and drank' or 'did everything that the others did', but there were some deviations in her descriptions of certain individuals.[71] As well as eating and drinking, *Bürgermeister* Rehel walked to and fro;[72] the Kuchenschreiberin, Grafencker, the cleric Jacob Nick and Peter Porzin all made merry;[73] Michael Girtenstihl, on the other hand, had 'vexed' other people at the feast,[74] and Veit, the cathedral administrator, did not drink despite his paramour's appearance as the landlady of an unnamed taproom.[75] Only the Old Schleifferin was said explicitly to have indulged in fornication, although a closer look at the companions and paramours of the denounced witches hints at much more sexual activity.[76] On a practical level, Ursl (Herr Barthlme Ging's cook) and two Marias, cooks to one Haime and to Herr von Biberbach, had to prepare the witches' meals.[77] Interestingly, although Bittelmayr did not mention it, Peter Porzin was twice referred to in the witch-trial documents as the *Platzmeister* (place-master), once by the witch-suspect (and Bittelmayr's close associate) Egina Penner and once by himself (without having been told of his denouncer's description).[78]

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[71] Egina Penner, for example, 'ate, drank and joined in everything', StAN, Hexenakten 45 (M. Bittelmayr), 29 October 1626.
[72] Ibid., 29 October 1626.
[73] Ibid., 31 October, 5 and 7 November 1626.
[74] Ibid., 6 November 1626.
[75] Ibid., 31 October 1626.
[76] Ibid., 6 November 1626.
[77] Ibid., 29 and 31 October, and 5 November 1626.
[78] StAN, Hexenakten 45 (P. Porzin), 18 September 1627, and (P. Porzin—denunciations), Item 13.

A *Platzmeister* seems to have had some function ordering the dancing, if not the feasting generally, during a celebration.

What is one to make of these details? That three professional cooks prepared the food and Porzin was assigned the job of keeping order suggest that the Eichstätt witch-suspects imagined the nocturnal gathering in a conventional way. It was an organized, orderly communal activity requiring the active involvement of certain skilled individuals. Bittelmayr's references to her merry-making accomplices suggest that it was also generally a convivial occasion, the vexatious Michael Girtenstihl notwithstanding. As I observed in chapter 2, making merry was something which Bittelmayr associated with wedding holidays, and Walburga Knab explicitly correlated the witches' gatherings and weddings (everything was 'as if at a wedding'). They were not, however, the only suspects to draw on the wedding motif in their confessions. Margretha Hackspacher stated that the witches sat at their usual places 'as at a wedding'.[79] Barbara Rabel made a more ambiguous connection between the two types of occasion. When telling of her entry into Tobias' cellar with her mother-in-law (Jacob Rabel's mother) and a farmer's wife, she was careful to note that she had done so two days before Dr Maÿer's wedding.[80] This detail served to date the episode, but it also suggests that she might have recalled going into this particular cellar during the preparations for the forthcoming wedding breakfast. It seems that it was a wedding or other such celebration that every Eichstätt witch-suspect described to their interrogators in place of a gathering of the witch sect which they could not imagine themselves attending. The superficial diabolical elements originated with the commissioners through the wording of their questions.

As these narrative details were grounded in experiences of real social gatherings, the many descriptions of paramours which took on forms appropriate to the class or profession of the alleged accomplices should not surprise us. In this context, the occasional inappropriate forms adopted by the demons offer an insight into the gossip about the sexual infelicities of some Eichstätt inhabitants. That the cathedral administrator was accompanied, in Bittelmayr's testimony, by a demon in the form of the landlady of a taproom is suggestive of adultery and drunkenness

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[79] StAN, Hexenakten 49 (N.N.—denunciations), Denunciation 12. The commissioners were reporting here the testimony of Margretha Hackspacher against an unnamed male witch-suspect. Hackspacher, wife of the cathedral sexton, was executed on 6 June 1625, DiöAE, "Urfehdebuch", ff. 224v–225r.

[80] StAN, Hexenakten 48 (B. Rabel), 27 September 1618 (p.m.).

(despite the administrator's abstemiousness). The same may be said of other pairings in her testimony: the Oblaierin and her paramour in the form of Herr von Seckendorf, probably a relation of the former prince-bishop;[81] Barthlme Ging and his cook Ursl;[82] Grafencker making merry with a 'brave, noble person' not dissimilar to the President's daughter;[83] and Jacob Nick and Elisabeth Halbmayr to whom he 'gave his whole attention'.[84] The denunciations of Paul Gabler are even more saturated with sexual indiscretion. Of the twenty-two suspects who named him among their accomplices, seven described his relations with real women in terms which were inappropriate for a married secretary of the *Hofrat*: he had danced with Anna Schrad who, as she confessed, had kissed him on the foot, revered him and fornicated with him;[85] Waldburg Hörmann and Sabina Walch both said that he had danced or made merry with the executed Hofwachtmeisterin;[86] Anna Maria Böhm confessed that she had sat next to him, chatted with him and then fornicated with him,[87] whilst Veronica Brändl only kissed him when she had sat by him;[88] and he had sat next to the executed Biebl Lenzin, heads together, after which they had danced.[89]

Although they may well have been priest and concubine, one could dismiss the appearance of Ging with his cook as a normal event. It would not have been uncommon for employers and their servants to be seen discussing the practical issues of household management together, or even getting along socially. The other details in the list of pairings cited above are more problematic. Whilst the wife of the *Oblaier*, a position held by a member of the *Hofrat*, might socialize with the clerical

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[81] StAN, Hexenakten 45 (M. Bittelmayr), 31 October 1626.
[82] Ibid., 31 October 1626.
[83] Ibid., 5 November 1626.
[84] Ibid., 5 November 1626.
[85] StAN, Hexenakten 43 (P. Gabler—denunciations), Denunciation 12, and Hexenakten 48 (P. Gabler—denunciations), Anna Schrad.
[86] StAN, Hexenakten 43 (P. Gabler—denunciations), Denunciations 11 and 20, and Hexenakten 48 (P. Gabler—denunciations), Walburga Hörmann and Sabina Kräser. Kräser was another of Sabina Walch's names; they are both given in Denunciation 20.
[87] StAN, Hexenakten 43 (P. Gabler—denunciations), Denunciation 13, and Hexenakten 48 (P. Gabler—denunciations), Anna Maria Böhm.
[88] StAN, Hexenakten 43 (P. Gabler—denunciations), Denunciation 18, and Hexenakten 48 (P. Gabler—denunciations), Veronica Brändl.
[89] This observation was made by Christoph Lauterer, StAN, Hexenakten 43 (P. Gabler—denunciations), Denunciation 16, and Hexenakten 48 (P. Gabler—denunciations), Christoph Lauterer.

elite on certain occasions (baptisms, marriages, funerals and religious festivals), she would not, as a woman, have associated with particular senior clerics at other times. Seckendorf, like his relation, the late bishop Caspar, was a member of a large Franconian noble family with long and well-established ties to all three Franconian prince-bishoprics. The men of this family sat on cathedral chapters and would have been too grand to have been mere parish priests or confessors, minor clerics with whom one would have expected the Oblaierin to have met frequently. In coupling the Oblaierin and Seckendorf, and indeed Grafencker and the President's daughter, Bittelmayr may have drawn on gossip, or her own suspicions, about the true nature of these relationships.

The pairing of Nick and Halbmayr also raises this possibility. Elisabeth Halbmayr had been executed as a witch on 23 April 1622, four years before her name appeared in Bittelamyr's testimony.[90] Nick, the object of Bittelmayr's denunciation, escaped prosecution for witchcraft. There is no traceable close relationship between Halbmayr and Nick. They were not mother and son, father and daughter, or brother and sister; and Nick does not seem to have employed Elisabeth Halbmayr as a servant. There seems to be no innocent reason why Nick should have given 'his whole attention to Endres Halbmayr's wife'. One has to ask why Bittelmayr added this detail to her denunciation of Jacob Nick, a detail which, if true, was so strongly embedded in her memory of Elisabeth Halbmayr that it had not faded after four years. One plausible explanation would seem to be that Nick and Halbmayr were associated together either in fact or in gossip. They may have been friends, they may have just flirted or they may have had sexual relations. The language of Bittelmayr's observation suggests, however, that she and perhaps her circle of gossips did not think that the relationship was entirely innocent. The same may also be said of the several sightings of the apparently charismatic Paul Gabler with other women, almost without exception the wives of his fellow councillors. Whilst several women—Schrad, Böhm and Brändl—seem to have had sexual relations with him or fantasized about doing so, three suspects (Hörmann, Walch and Christoph Lauterer) were able to place him in adulterous contexts with other women. The interrogators may have directed these witch-suspects to discuss Gabler in the context of adultery which would suggest that they entertained some suspicions about his moral

[90] DiöAE, "Urfehdebuch", ff. 197v–198r.

character. The variations in their accounts (associating him with different suspects) and the detail with which they were able to describe his relationships (in every instance, real women with whom he did something specific) also suggest that they could imagine him, but not others among their neighbours, acting in these indiscreet ways. These imaginings may well have had some basis in the common gossip which circulated about Gabler.

Descriptions of accomplices at the diabolical gathering as wedding feast expose fractures in the image of social cohesion found in other contexts in which the witch-suspects spoke about the sharing of food and drink with their neighbours and kin. These cracks in local neighbourly relations did not, however, reflect a political or social crisis within the community itself. The strained relationships were not those which cut across class divisions separating the poor witch from her uncharitable victim. Rather, the relationships which were threatened were those between spouses, the Halbmayrs, the Gablers and the Schrads, and it is the adultery, real or merely supposed, of a husband or wife with someone of approximately equal social status which made those couples vulnerable to gossip. Whilst the political and economic consequences for some or all of the households affected by these adulterous liaisons should not be underestimated, such impropriety was a perennial feature of western and central European society.[91] It was not sufficient to provoke individual accusations of witchcraft, much less a witch persecution.

Like the disagreement described in the previous chapter between Michael Hochenschildt and Maria Lang over a pair of shoes, adultery is a feature of social relations which one should expect to find in any early modern community. The few suggestions of adultery do not appear in the denunciations of the accomplices gathered to worship the Devil because mention of such a sin reinforced the accusation, one sin predisposing the sinner to further sin generally and, in the particular context of adultery, to seduction by the Devil (which involved fornicating with him). They appear because larger communal gatherings allowed amorous couples to get together. Men and women usually socialized with their own sex. In normal circumstances, men like Michael Hochenschildt, Valtin Lanng or Georg Silbereis drank their beer and

[91] On adultery in early modern Germany, see Rublack, *The Crimes of Women in Early Modern Germany*, pp. 213–24, and Lyndal Roper, *The Holy Household: Women and Morals in Reformation Augsburg* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), pp. 194–205.

wine with other men; women like Margretha Bittelmayr drank with her gossips. When female witch-suspects entered cellars they tended to do so with other women. The wedding feast, however, allowed men and women to get together, and their conversations and flirting were aided by the atmosphere, the drink, the dancing, and the food. For some couples, whether they were courting or adulterous, it was this atmosphere which allowed them to get to know each other much better than they could in everyday situations where the routines of the household and the constant proximity of other household members might inhibit the development of intimate relationships.[92] By taking their relationships further in this public situation, however, couples risked exposing their feelings and becoming the object of communal censure or gossip. When the witch-suspects were listing their accomplices, they named those whom they would normally have expected to see at a wedding or similar communal event, and in this context knowledge of illicit sexual relationships or the gossip which had attached itself to certain individuals found its way into the descriptions of others incidentally rather than consciously.

[92] This is not to deny that the physical closeness of household members did not encourage new relationships. Such relationships have been noted in, for example, Rublack, *The Crimes of Women in Early Modern Germany*, p. 147, and Roper, "Will and Honour: Sex, Words and Power in Augsburg Criminal Trials", in ead., *Oedipus and the Devil*, pp. 53–78 (p. 69). I just want to point to the advantages of a holiday for the relaxing of social proprieties.

CHAPTER FIVE

SEX

Explicit references to sexual relations occur at the beginning of several confessions. Margretha Bittelmayr's second account of her seduction into the witch sect, for example, was occasioned by her experiences with her bed-partner Anna, but completed by the Devil in the form of her future husband Jacob. Many other suspects were also seduced by the Devil in the form of a spouse or, more often, a lover. Adultery provided an alternative, although less frequently used, context within which a suspect could begin to construct a narrative of diabolical seduction. During his fourth session of interrogation on 13 September 1627, Peter Porzin, for example, prefaced his seduction story with a description of a sexual encounter which may have happened soon after his first marriage. About sixteen years before his arrest, he had been at a wedding whilst on business near Neuburg. He had found himself with a beautiful woman named Anna Maria and the same night in an inn he had 'gained an unseemly love for her'.[1] Three days later the Devil appeared to him in this woman's form and fornicated with him, after which the Devil revealed himself and the pact followed.[2] In 1611, when this episode had apparently taken place, Porzin would have celebrated the first anniversary of his marriage to Maria Reim, daughter of Andreas Reim, the *Oblaier* of the cathedral chapter (they had married on 11 July 1610).[3] Prostitution, on the other hand, was the setting for the seduction of Anna Harding. Harding began her account

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[1] StAN, Hexenakten 45 (P. Porzin), 13 September 1627.

[2] Ibid., 13 September 1627.

[3] Buchner, "Eichstätter Familienbuch", p. 47 (entered as Parzinger, Peter). The marriage was formalized on 17 August 1610. Incidentally, the witnesses to the marriage were the *Hofrat* Michael Mittner (husband of the witch Maria Martha Mittner, DiöAE, "Urfehdebuch", ff. 177v–178v), and Caspar Moringer (husband of the witch Eva Susanna Moringer). Caspar and Eva Susanna were godparents to Peter and Maria's two children born before 1618. They had then had another seven or eight according to Porzin's testimony given to the witch commissioners, StAN, Hexenakten 45 (P. Porzin), 10 September 1627. After his wife's execution on 23 June 1623 (DiöAE, "Urfehdebuch", f. 208r), Porzin married one Anna Maria with whom he had now had two children with another on the way, StAN, Hexenakten 45 (P. Porzin), 10 September 1627. Whether she was the Anna Maria referred to in the seduction story, he did not say.

of her seduction by the Devil by naming three priests with whom she had had sex over the past eighteen years. The first of these, Hans Jobst of Jettingen (Harding's home town) had given her eleven Dreikreuzer pieces.[4] The interrogators had to interrupt Harding's narrative to bring her back to the point, the diabolical seduction. For this the Devil had assumed the form of a nobleman of Freihalden in Swabia and met her in a wood.[5]

Diabolical seduction

Confessions of morally suspect or illicit sexual activity were provoked by the interrogators' questions about seduction and the need to construct an imaginatively plausible story of an encounter with a spiritual being at once too powerful to be resisted and, beneath his human disguise, too repulsive to be attractive. In grappling with this scenario, the witch-suspects recycled personal experiences or fantasies of sex with real people, experiences which made sense because they had, or could have, happened, and because they followed a similar pattern of exchange as occurred between the Devil and the potential witch. In popular culture, it was common for young men to seduce women into sex by promising marriage, and a prostitute required the payment of a fee in exchange for access to her body.[6] This form of exchange is mirrored in the conventional tales of witchcraft. The Devil claimed he could supply a significant need (usually for money rather than the security of marriage) in exchange for the person's soul, a transaction sealed through sexual intercourse. Thus Barbara Rabel claimed to have exchanged her soul and body for the money she desperately needed to pay a day-labourer.[7] The conflation of sexual and diabolical seduction was so pervasive that alternative forms of non-sexual seduction by the Devil hardly feature in the confession narratives, even though the questions in the interrogatory concerning the entry into the witch sect precede the question about sex with the Devil.[8] Sometimes one

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[4] StAN, Hexenakten 48 (A. Harding), 17 February 1618 (a.m.).

[5] Ibid., 17 February 1618 (a.m.).

[6] Cavallo and Cerutti, "Female Honor and the Social Control of Reproduction in Piedmont", and Rublack, *The Crimes of Women in Early Modern Germany*, p. 145.

[7] StAN, Hexenakten 48 (B. Rabel), 27 September 1618 (p.m.).

[8] There are five questions about when and how a suspect was seduced into the vice of witchcraft before she was asked 'What he [the Devil] desired of her, whether and

witch confessed to being seduced by or seducing another without sexual intercourse happening, especially when a mother seduced a child. Even in these circumstances, however, sexual seduction by the Devil was usually appended to the story. Enders Gutmann confessed that he was seduced by his mother in the moral sense and only added a sexual element (sex with a lover who turned out to be demonic) after further specific questioning on this point.[9] Stories of sexual activity were not, however, confined to this section of the witch-confessions. In their descriptions of their accomplices, some suspects described or hinted at fornication and adultery. Other suspects, like Anna Harding and Kunigunda Pronner, gave detailed accounts of their sexual histories. Lovers who were unable to marry and a case of bestiality also appear in other confessions. Together these narratives offer a rich account of the sexual relations and complex emotional lives of the inhabitants of Eichstätt which is not confined to the fantasy of sex with the Devil. Nor does this account fully accord with either early modern normative prescriptions which attempted to constrain sexual activity within marriage or our modern understanding that sex for early modern women was inevitably bound up with notions of honour and reproduction.

In both Bittelmayr's and Porzin's stories of seduction, the Devil manipulated a pre-existing sexual relationship to gain the soul of the witch. Anna and Jacob in Bittelmayr's narrative and Anna Maria in Porzin's were real people known intimately by the suspects; they were not forms assumed initially by the Devil. As a consequence, in their narratives neither witch recognized their sexual partner for what he was on the occasion of the seduction. Rather, the Devil duplicitously took the form of Jacob and Anna Maria. Both Bittelmayr and Porzin chose to confess illicit relations with other people as a background to their entry into the witch sect because they were directed to do so by the witch commissioners.

Prior to their questions about the witch's seduction by the Devil, the interrogators concerned themselves specifically with each suspect's sexual propriety. In question 12 of the interrogatory they asked, with reference to the witch-suspect's spouse, 'Whether she had not previously, when single, had disorderly love with him, mixed with him in

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how often she mixed with him in the flesh', StAN, Hexenakten 49 (Interrogatory, fair copy), Question 30.

[9] StAN, Hexenakten 48 (E. Gutmann), 11 January 1618 (p.m.).

the flesh, or done such things willingly'.[10] In question 13, the suspect was asked where, when and how often this had happened, and also who paired them off together.[11] Soon after, the interrogators would have asked question 17 which began 'If she had not during her marriage won disorderly love with others…'.[12] Later among the various questions about the witch-suspect's seduction, the commissioners asked when, where and on what occasions or at what opportunity the witch came into the vice (questions 25–27).[13] Question 36 was concerned with the witch's fornication with the Devil and the form in which he appeared.[14] The suspects were therefore asked to think specifically about their sexual misdemeanours and about sex with the Devil. It is hardly surprising that some recycled biographical information to fit the purposes of the interrogation, or that Bittelmayr appropriated the vocabulary of the interrogatory to state that she had 'won' the love of her husband Jacob.[15]

Same-sex sexual relations

Forced into responding to questions about diabolical seduction in the idiom of illicit sex, both Bittelmayr and Porzin revealed the existence of an alternative sexual world. Same-sex sexual relations, pre-marital sex and adultery disturb the illusion of legitimate heterosexual relations fostered by the prescriptions of the patriarchy to which members of the political classes, like Bittelmayr and Porzin, were supposed to adhere, especially in the ecclesiastical principalities of the Holy Roman Empire where Tridentine reforms were beginning to have an impact on law, social discipline and cultural expression. It is difficult to gauge how these two suspects felt about their past sexual activities, or even their veracity. In both cases neither they nor their interrogators commented on their moral position; nor did the witch commissioners pursue the tales of sexual transgression. In Bittelmayr's case, however, we have an intriguing insight into same-sex sexual relations between women. Beyond the women who were educated sufficiently to articulate their erotic interest

[10] StAN, Hexenakten 49 (Interrogatory, fair copy), Question 12.
[11] Ibid., Question 13.
[12] Ibid., Question 17.
[13] Ibid., Questions 25–27.
[14] Ibid., Question 36.
[15] StAN, Hexenakten 45 (M. Bittelmayr), 16 October 1626.

in other women, we often only gain knowledge of these sexual relations when they came to court because the women had married each other illegally or been caught in the act.[16] These women were forced to describe and account for their behaviour. Bittelmayr's confession of sexual relations with her bed-partner Anna was, however, neither sought nor explored, and the casual way in which it was introduced into the record invites comment.

One negative reading of Bittelmayr's experience with Anna is that Anna was abusing her companion. In discussing the physical intimacies of service within the early modern household, Laura Gowing catalogues the abuse which female servants sometimes received at the hands of their masters and male colleagues. Some of this abuse centred on the sleeping arrangements within the household which sometimes brought men and women into close physical proximity, but generally we only know about it because the women got pregnant and legal authorities became involved with their cases. A young woman who was being sexually abused or intimidated by an older female servant with whom she shared a bed would not have found herself before the authorities charged with bastardy. She might also have lacked a language with which to articulate her experiences. The Yorkshire servant Maria Bevers could complain to her neighbours about the behaviour of her master in terms which were erotic ('kissing', 'playing') and hinted at the disruption it was causing to the household ('hindering her work').[17] The very ambivalence of female touch and space and its lack of obvious physical consequence for the servant and the honour of the household meant that someone like Margretha Bittelmayr could not easily report her experiences to her neighbours, much less the authorities, even if she had wanted to.

A more positive reading is that Margretha enjoyed the physical intimacy she shared with Anna. Their experiences as servants cannot be elevated to the politics of touch characteristic of bed-sharing between women at the royal court or well-born male friends in more personal

[16] Articulations of early modern female homoeroticism can be found in Valerie Traub, *The Renaissance of Lesbianism in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002). Patricia Crawford and Sara Mendelson, "Sexual Identities in Early Modern England: The Marriage of Two Women in 1680", *Gender and History*, 7 (1995), pp. 362–77, is an analysis of one marriage between women which came before the courts.

[17] Gowing, *Common Bodies*, p. 61.

circumstances.[18] Sexual intimacy between these two women might, however, have sealed the bonds of friendship in ways that eating and drinking did for Michael Hochenschildt and Hans Baur. Respectable servant women would not have been permitted to drink in the tavern (except when travelling or, perhaps, celebrating a wedding), and they were not usually in a position to share meals on a one-to-one basis because their eating would have been communal in the kitchen of the master. The bed might have been the one place where these women could have shared all sorts of intimacies: their experiences, hopes, fears, opinions, fantasies and dreams, as well as their bodies. Many of these intimacies, especially where they concerned other members of the household, might have been too dangerous to articulate in public where they could have resulted in beatings or dismissal. In sharing these intimacies, however, including that of touch, bonds of friendship may well have been strengthened too.

The language used by Bittelmayr to describe her experience with Anna is interesting too. Anna 'handled her and rolled around with her like a male person'.[19] At one level, one could argue that this type of same-sex experience was an initiatory one. Anna was teaching Margretha about the practicalities of heterosexual sex: this is how a man makes love to a woman. One can, however, place the description in two other contexts. One of the observations made by Michael Rocke of male same-sex practices in Florence is that the position the man took in the act of sex had to correspond to his social standing. A young man could be passive; an older man could not unless, like Salvi Panuzzi, he was willing to risk courting execution.[20] The same age/gender correspondence is retained in Bittelmayr's description. It is the older woman who acts as the man. Unfortunately, one cannot know whether Bittelmayr was simply describing the act as she experienced it or whether she manipulated it to conform to cultural norms about how sexual relations ought to be described in public.

Similarly, the language adopted by Bittelmayr fits Valerie Traub's description of female desire for other women in the seventeenth

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[18] The importance of bed-sharing among elite women is teased out by Gowing in ibid., pp. 66–9, and among men by Alan Bray, *The Friend* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2003), pp. 153–6.

[19] StAN, Hexenakten 48 (M. Bittelmayr), 16 October 1626.

[20] Michael Rocke, "Gender and Sexual Culture in Renaissance Italy", in Judith C. Brown and Robert C. Davis (eds.), *Gender and Society in Renaissance Italy* (London: Longman, 1998), pp. 150–70 (p. 169).

century.[21] Bittelmayr created a representation of female sex which implicitly echoes the tense balance of heterosexuality, chastity, marriage and femininity at this time. Her description represents a heterosexual understanding of sexual activity because Anna adopts the 'male' role; in doing so, however, her brief sentence challenges the normative context of marriage as the place for sex. The appropriate content of femininity is also challenged because the sex act is no longer constrained by notions of female honour or the need to regulate reproduction. They do not matter in this context because the basic causes of so much dishonour in illicit sexual relations—the trespassing on another man's 'property' (his wife), the implicit usurpation of his role as head of the household by another man and the bearing of illegitimate children—will not occur. If honour and reproduction are no longer issues for women engaging in same-sex sexual relations, then they are not bound to be chaste. In the ambivalence of patriarchy towards female sexual desire for other women, the world becomes turned upside down in quite radical ways which cannot be easily remedied because there is little damage of consequence to remedy; the household emerges in tact and without shame. It was only when women tried to set up their own households as married couples or, in the case of Benedetta Carlini, usurp the male role within her convent, that patriarchy was undermined and the authorities could act to restore order.[22]

The problem with Bittelmayr's description of sex with Anna is that one cannot tell how common her experience was. A large and increasing literature would suggest that female same-sex relations were more of a feature of early modern life than was once thought. As sharing of beds was commonplace at all levels of society from ladies at court down to household servants who might, like Bittelmayr, have been born and later marry into the families of citizens, a certain amount of sexual activity in those beds is probably to be expected. Certainly Bittelmayr could well imagine what historians once thought was unimaginable and, more importantly, she had a vocabulary with which to articulate, succinctly, her experience of sex with another woman, even if this vocabulary was appropriated from normative heterosexual discourse. Yet none of

[21] Valerie Traub, "The Perversion of 'Lesbian' Desire", *History Workshop Journal*, 41 (Spring 1996), pp. 19–49.

[22] Crawford and Mendelson, "Sexual Identities in Early Modern England", and Judith C. Brown, *Immodest Acts: The Life of a Lesbian Nun in Renaissance Italy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986).

her fellow witches in Eichstätt spoke of such experiences. What they most frequently told of was fornication, and they seem to have been as ambivalent about this as Bittelmayr was about sex with Anna.

Fornication and adultery

On 14 February 1619, Eva Susanna Moringer gave three versions of her seduction into the witch sect. In the first, she was seduced by a former canon of Eichstätt who was now in Würzburg.[23] Moringer did not suggest that the Würzburger, as he was known, had been the Devil in disguise. In the second, when she was single and living with her mother at Tannenbühl, she had met a hunter at the market who did turn out to be the Devil.[24] This morning session of interrogation was then adjourned. When it was resumed in the afternoon, Moringer stated that 'a large thing' had appeared to her when she was in bed.[25] She then repeated the narrative about her seduction by the hunter, but added much more detail. He had a black beard and she had loved him. They drank together at the annual market at Leitershausen. On the way home to Tannenbühl with her maid, the hunter came to her again in the wood. It was dark and they fornicated with each other.[26]

The third version of her seduction took place in Eichstätt, presumably after Eva Susanna had married Caspar Moringer. She had gone with her maid to buy fish at the Spitalbrücke. While they were there she took the opportunity to go into the Spital where she was seduced by the Devil in the form of Spital Hansel who had since been executed as a witch.[27] This third story of seduction seems to interrupt the flow of the second. Moringer had already confessed that the Old Schweizerin of Tannenbühl had facilitated her meetings with the hunter, and that the Devil had come to her in her mother's bedchamber where he had given her his mark and promised her a ring which she had never received.[28]

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[23] StAN, Hexenakten 48 (E.S. Moringer), 14 February 1619 (a.m.).

[24] Ibid., 14 February 1619 (a.m.).

[25] Ibid., 14 February 1619 (p.m.). The thing appeared as a 'saul' (column) or 'gaul' (horse—the beginning of the word is not clear), half black and half white.

[26] Ibid., 14 February 1619 (p.m.).

[27] Ibid., 14 February 1619 (p.m.). Spital Hansel was described as executed in Moringer's (and other) confessions. His name would suggest that he was perhaps Hans Wagner (the only Hans or Johann executed as a witch in Eichstätt to this date), DiöAE, "Urfehdebuch", ff. 156r–158v and 164r–v.

[28] StAN, Hexenakten 48 (E.S. Moringer), 14 February 1619 (p.m.).

Her baptism had taken place at Tannenbühl witnessed by two hunters' wives, Anna and Barbel, who were subjects of the margrave of Ansbach, and therefore nominally Lutherans; this baptism had been preceded by a good meal shared with the Devil.[29] After confessing to the alternative story of seduction by Spital Hansel, Moringer again repeated the second version: the hunter had come to her in a wood and she had fornicated with him, but this time he had disappeared in the morning.[30] Eight days later, the hunter came to her in her mother's house where she was baptized. The witnesses to this baptism were three farmers' maids; the Old Schweizerin had been her teacher.[31]

That Eva Susanna Moringer had had sexual relations with both the Würzburger and Spital Hansel is entirely plausible. The relationship with the hunter, 'whom she had loved before', is, however, much more developed in her narrative and reads like the tale of a courting couple.[32] They flirted at the annual market and seem to have arranged to meet along her journey home, or else he surprised her. He had every right to be in the wood because that was his place of work. If anyone caught him out in it at night, he would have had a reasonable excuse for being there. As the maid kept watch or otherwise occupied herself, Moringer and the hunter made love and slept together in the wood until morning. In stereotypical seduction narratives, in contrast, the Devil never appears to women in company, perhaps because they would then have been better able to defend themselves against his persuasions, and he never stays all night, but disappears immediately after fornicating with the new witch and securing a pact. After they had spent the night together, Moringer and her hunter continued to meet in the Old Schweizerin's house and in Moringer's mother's bechamber, and the Old Schweizerin was complicit in permitting them to fulfil their sexual desires. They also ate with the wives of other hunters which suggests that they were accepted by and integrated into the wider community as a couple.

At some time the hunter promised Moringer a ring. In other words, he promised to marry her, and probably she had promised in the words common to both lovers and witches that she would be his. For

[29] Ibid., 14 February 1619 (p.m.). Here, again, we encounter a celebratory event as a gathering for witches.
[30] Ibid., 15 February 1619 (p.m.).
[31] Ibid., 15 February 1619 (p.m.).
[32] Ibid., 14 February 1619 (p.m.).

some reason—the opposition of her parents, the cooling of the lovers' passion or the death of the hunter—the ring was never given. The ring itself was, however, a different kind of object to the money usually offered to the potential witch. Moringer had only a symbolic need for a ring; she was not desperate for money such as Barbara Rabel had needed to pay the day-labourer, for example.[33] The ring was also withheld, whereas in all other cases where money was offered it was given immediately after sex with the Devil, even if it later turned into roofstones or tiles in Rabel's case or horse muck in others.[34] The ring was a lover's pledge more than the money payment which a witch (or prostitute) might expect.

Moringer's tale of courtship is the most developed in the extant trial material, but it was neither unique (as Margretha Bittelmayr's testimony about her husband Jacob shows) nor the only relationship which ended in failure. When confessing to his harmful acts of witchcraft, Georg Gutmann testified that he had once got a maid pregnant.[35] In all likelihood, he had not fallen in love with her, but abused his position as the master's son in order to force sex on her. He did not, however, diabolize his relationship with her. Instead, he stated that he had pledged himself to keep the maid even if he should no longer receive the sacrament.[36] Unfortunately for the maid, he had pledged his word against his parents' wishes and his mother, so Georg claimed, had forced the maid go away whilst he had been out. Here one has evidence of the pressure brought to bear on children to forgo their former rights to conduct their own courtships and make themselves responsible for the consequences of their sexual activity in favour of the wishes of the parents. Prior to the Council of Trent, and in many places after it, children were able to create such clandestine marriages; the 'Tametsi' decree, by requiring ecclesiastical involvement in marriages and the publication of banns, made these clandestine arrangements much more difficult to contract.[37]

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[33] StAN, Hexenakten 48 (B. Rabel), 5 October 1618 (a.m.). This had occurred after her seduction into the sect.

[34] Ibid., 20 September 1618 (a.m.). Barbara Haubner's money, for example, turned into 'horse muck', StAN, Hexenakten 48 (B. Haubner), 20 January 1618 (a.m.). She had been in poverty at this time.

[35] StAN, Hexenakten 48 (G. Gutmann), 31 January 1618 (a.m.).

[36] Ibid., 31 January 1618 (a.m.).

[37] Even where Tridentine reforms were being imposed in the early seventeenth century, there was resistance to the new ways, Forster, *The Counter-Reformation in the Villages*, p. 99.

Parents, of course, had always been able to manipulate their children's relationships by subtle and not-so-subtle means, limiting the social circle of the children and withdrawing financial support if necessary. In Gutmann's case he was also denied the right to support his illegitimate child, even if he was unable and perhaps unwilling to marry this particular servant. Secure restitution of honour was not available to the servant who might reasonably have expected to receive it. Interestingly, however, it was Gutmann's mother, not his father, who acted against her son's pledge. It seems that the encouragement and regulation of courting couples and pre-marital sexual relationships was a role taken on by mothers and other older women.

Whilst Gutmann's mother effectively terminated his relationship with the maid (and got rid of her as a potential burden at the same time), Moringer's relationship with the hunter seems to have been aided by the Old Schweizerin, her diabolical teacher, in whose house the lovers met. Moringer's mother may also have consented to the relationship for the pair met in her bedchamber too. Other female suspects seem to have played similar active roles in the encouragement of meetings between lovers. Although Anna Beck, for example, was seduced by the Devil in the unremarkable and conventional guise of an anonymous citizen, as befitted her status as the wife of one baker and widow of another and a miller, she was much more explicit about the Devil's appearance in the seduction of three of her maids.[38] She had been asked whom she had seduced into the witch sect and in her reply she appeared as the initial seducer of the three girls in the sense that she was the first to corrupt them morally.[39] Beck, however, like other witch-suspects when confessing to such seductions of new witches, seems to have found it necessary to append a story of diabolical sexual seduction to each case. Thus, after Beck had converted her maid Anna, she was seduced by the Devil in the form of the apprentice of the watchman who then served in Schlaggasse.[40] In Grettlin's case, the Devil took the form of a baker's apprentice;[41] and Apollonia met him in the form of a glass-maker.[42] In the cases of Anna and Grettlin, the Devil assumed a form

[38] For the description of the citizen-Devil, StAN, Hexenakten 48 (A. Beck), 25 January 1618 (p.m.). For Beck's marital history, ibid., 23 January 1618.
[39] Ibid., 15 February 1618 (a.m.) and 20 February 1618 (p.m.).
[40] Ibid., 15 February 1618 (a.m.).
[41] Ibid., 15 February 1618 (a.m.).
[42] Ibid., 20 February 1618 (p.m.).

of someone for whom Beck claimed that the girl 'had love'.[43] Anna did not end up with the apprentice, but was 'taken' by a *Landesknecht*. Grettlin and Apollonia had, however, been more successful in the love lives identified by Beck: Grettlin and her apprentice had emigrated together to Bavaria; and Apollonia had married the glassmaker and was living in Konstein.[44] If only imaginatively, Beck was acting as the facilitator of sexual relationships between her maids and boys from the town of Eichstätt. In her confession she suggested that she had been aware of the girls' feelings for these young men and does not seem to have discouraged their meetings, seemingly in her house as that is where the seductions were alleged to have taken place.

At least until the election of Westerstetten to the episcopate, neither Anna Beck, the Old Schweizerin nor Moringer's mother had reason to entertain misgivings about stable pre-marital sexual relationships of which they approved and which were a prelude to marital life once the couple were in a position to wed. Sometimes these relationships nurtured in the households of an older generation became the foundations of new households without passing through the rite of a marriage witnessed and blessed by the priest. This may have happened in the cases of Anna and Grettlin, Beck's servants, who are not described as getting married to the men who took them. One finds more concrete cases of clandestine marriage or cohabitation in other local sources. Georg Mittner, for example, fathered three children with Barbara Koller, daughter of the citizen Christoph Koller, before their marriage on 29 January 1597. The first two of these, Anna and Margaretha, were born in the reign of Caspar von Seckendorf (on 15 October 1592 and 13 July 1594 respectively). Georg and Barbara's twins, Sabine and Georg, were born on 11 September 1597, less than eight months after the marriage, and could therefore have been conceived prior to the wedding. Thereafter they had three 'legitimate' children together. Mittner himself was a *Hofrat* and the treasurer of Eichstätt, the son of the 'old treasurer' Johann Mittner.[45] His brother Michael, also a *Hofrat*, was the bursar whose wife, Maria Martha, was executed for witchcraft in

[43] Ibid., 15 February 1618 (a.m.). The implication would be that as the Devil appeared in the form of Apollonia's future husband, she 'had love' for him too, although Beck does not state this, ibid., 20 February 1618 (p.m.).

[44] Ibid., 15 February 1618 (a.m.) and 20 February 1618 (p.m.).

[45] Buchner, "Eichstätter Familienbuch", pp. 237–8.

1619.[46] Georg's irregular relations with Barbara (they probably lived together) did not diminish his social and political standing. Apart from retaining his place as *Hofrat* and treasurer, the witnesses to his marriage were Moritz Hagenbacher, then secretary to the *Hofrat*, Hans Heim, also a treasurer and relative of Martin Höning's second wife and the witch Andreas Heim, and Leonhard Eberspacher, then a master of the forests.[47] The godmother to the two eldest daughters was Margaretha Röttinger, possibly related to the witches Michael and Maria Rottinger [sic];[48] her husband, Nikolaus, a butcher, was appointed godfather to the eldest son.[49] They were also godparents to the remaining children, depending on sex, with the exception of the female twin, Sabine, whose godmother was Sabina Schultheis, wife of the chancellor Andreas. In the reigns of Seckendorf and Gemmingen therefore pre-marital sex, at least regularly with one person, did not have any affect on the way in which one was viewed by one's peers.

If the pre-marital fornication which pervades the different parts of the witches' confessions was not regarded as a moral problem among the secular population of Eichstätt during the years of persecution, it seems to have been equally acceptable in widowhood. The unidentified male suspect who may have been Hans Wagner stated that he lived in widowhood with a woman 'as if with his own wife'.[50] There is, however, often a blurring of the boundaries in the confession narratives between simple fornication between single people and adultery. The most difficult narrative to untangle in this regard is that of Margretha Bittelmayr. If her testimony is correct then she and her husband Jacob enjoyed a much shorter period in an irregular sexual relationship than Mittner and Koller. In her narrative of seduction, the relations with her colleague Anna took place twenty-seven years before her arrest when she would have been about twenty-five years old;[51] and she claimed to have 'lived' with Jacob for twenty-six years, which suggests that she had been married, clandestinely at least, for about that long.[52] The problem with her testimony is that other records show that Margretha was in fact

[46] Ibid., p. 238.
[47] Ibid., p. 238.
[48] Maria Rottinger was executed on 3 August 1624 and her husband Michael on 8 May 1627, DiöAE, "Urfehdebuch", ff. 216v–217r and 235r.
[49] Buchner, "Eichstätter Familienbuch", p. 238.
[50] StAN, Hexenakten 48 (H. Wagner?), 16 May 1618 (a.m.).
[51] StAN, Hexenakten 45 (M. Bittelmayr), 16 October 1626.
[52] Ibid., 15 October 1626.

the second wife of Jacob Bittelmayr and that they had married after October 1608 when Jacob's only child by his first wife, Walburga, had been born.[53] Jacob and Margretha's first child, also Jacob, was born at the end of March 1611.[54] It is likely that the witch commissioners' scribe recorded Bittelmayr's testimony incorrectly, substituting sixteen years (which was the number of years Margretha seems to have been able to have lived with Jacob without their relationship being adulterous or bigamous) with twenty-six. The mistake conveniently provides Bittelmayr's second tale of seduction with a coherency it would otherwise have lacked. If the clerk had been diligent in his work, it would have appeared that Bittelmayr was lying for a second time because the typical seduction narrative requires seduction by the Devil to follow immediately upon seduction into the witch sect and not a decade later. Whatever intriguing questions the inconsistencies in Bittelmayr's testimony raise, she candidly stated that it was the sexual knowledge which she had gained from the servant Anna which helped her win Jacob as a husband. It seems probable therefore that she had had sex with Jacob during the short period of their courtship beginning after Jacob was widowed.

If Bittelmayr's testimony leads one to consider, mistakenly, the possibility of adultery, this crime appears more concretely in other witch confessions. Peter Porzin placed his experience or fantasy of unseemly love with Anna Maria after his marriage to Maria Reim. Even if Porzin had slightly confused his chronology and meant to suggest that he had succumbed to the sin of lust prior to his marriage, it would only have been just before this according to his testimony. At about the same time, he and his family may well have been negotiating a marriage settlement with the Reims, and the couple may, like Georg Mittner and Barbara Koller, have already been living together. Margretha Geiger and Kunigunda Pronner were more explicit about their adultery. In Geiger's first account of her seduction, recorded on the afternoon of 23 March 1618, she claimed that the Devil appeared to her in the form of a carter whom she took to be her husband. The seduction took place at night in her room; they had sex on the bed.[55] The witch commissioners recognized this description for what it was, a scene of

[53] Buchner, "Eichstätter Familienbuch", p. 68.
[54] Ibid., p. 68.
[55] StAN, Hexenakten 48 (M. Geiger), 23 March 1618 (p.m.).

normal conjugal relations, so they asked Geiger how she discovered that she was making love to the Devil. She called out the name 'Jesus' and made the cross; the Devil disappeared.[56] And his 'thing' was not like her husband's.[57] Geiger could have exclaimed Jesus' name during sex, and noting that the Devil's penis was not the same as her husband's was a stereotypical observation which marked him out from other men. Making the cross during sex, but before becoming aware of the deception, seems improbable. This was not, however, the reason why Dr Freisinger, who may not have extracted the original story of Geiger's seduction, returned to it more than a month later.[58]

In the month or more since Geiger had begun her testimony, she had been the model defendant. She had described her seduction, baptism, sacrilege, accomplices and malevolence in good order. After the morning session of questioning on 29 March she was led back into custody, and she was not to return to the interrogation chamber until the afternoon of 27 April.[59] She had not taken this month's quiet to reflect on her position and devise a strategy which might lead to her acquittal. Rather than assert her innocence, Geiger simply answered Freisinger's questions about her conditions in custody.[60] He then returned to the first questions of the interrogatory relating to the witch's seduction, but indicated that he suspected Geiger of lying about this event: 'how long ago was it that she had been seduced into this vice, because one can tell from all circumstances that it had to be longer than she had reported above'.[61] Geiger repeated the substance of her original seduction story, but this time her husband had been out and no one else was in the room when the Devil had come to her in the form of his former apprentice, Georg, a Lutheran who now lived about four leagues from Eichstätt. This was a satisfactory tale of seduction and the interrogation returned to the subject of the sabbath and the denunciation of further accomplices.[62]

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[56] Ibid., 23 March 1618 (p.m.).
[57] Ibid., 23 March 1618 (p.m.).
[58] Ibid., 27 April 1618 (p.m.). It is unclear whether Dr Freisinger attended all sessions of this interrogation. He was certainly present at the indictment of Geiger (ibid., 21 March 1618).
[59] Ibid., 29 March 1618 (a.m.) and 27 April 1618 (p.m.).
[60] He wanted to know about her dealings with 'the mad Swabian woman' and about her food, especially during Lent. She had survived on soup and cabbage until after Easter when she sometimes had a little pork or beef, ibid., 27 April 1618 (p.m.).
[61] Ibid., 27 April 1618 (p.m.).
[62] Ibid., 27 April 1618 (p.m.).

As Geiger was telling her updated version of seduction, however, she let slip a minor detail. The Devil had assumed the form of an apprentice 'for whom she had love before'.[63] This was an unnecessary admission. Whatever her feelings for Georg and her actual conduct with him, she claimed to have had sex with him after her marriage to Lorenz Geiger; it was already adultery, made worse by Georg's Lutheranism, and had justification enough in the powerful persuasions of the Devil. Perhaps stating that she had once loved Georg enabled Geiger to imagine better the seduction by the Devil. Or she may have actually slept with him. The phrase used by Geiger is very similar to those used by Eva Susanna Moringer in her description of her feelings for the hunter and by Anna Beck to describe the sexual relations between her maids Anna and Grettlin and their boyfriends. To have had love may therefore have meant to have had sex, at least in the stories told by these women. Together with the other stories I have discussed, these narratives allow one to reconstruct a vibrant sexual world which was not always constrained by patriarchal norms promoting chastity, honour and reproduction as the virtues of restrained sexual activity, or by innovative decrees forcing a new concept of marriage on the population. It was a world in which some women exercised agency either as lovers or their patrons, especially in the years before marriage, and secured the bonds of intimacy created in other contexts such as the sharing of food and drink.

Prostitution

In the cases I have been discussing the witch had adulterous relationships with social equals, residents of distant towns, or subordinates within the same household. His or her motive had been lust or love, and there is no suggestion in these cases of coercion into a relationship. Kunigunda Pronner had, in contrast, been compelled to sleep with at least one man in order to support herself. Pronner was the daughter of itinerant beggars and had been in and out of vagrancy until she was about thirty years old when Urban and Anna Widman of Berching took her on as a maid. She had worked for them ever since and was, at the time of her arrest, sixty or a little younger.[64] Her years of begging

[63] Ibid., 27 April 1618 (p.m.).
[64] StAN, Hexenakten 48 (K. Pronner), General Interrogatory, Articles 3 and 4.

had been interspersed with short periods of service in a succession of villages and towns. During these early unstable years, Pronner had given birth to three children by different fathers. All of the children died quite young. The father of the first was one Pracher, a servant in Oberndorf. He was single and at the time both he and Kunigunda were in the service of the same farmer. Kunigunda was left to bring up the child by herself and it died, aged three, after she had left the farmer's household and moved on to serve in other villages.[65] Pracher may have intended to marry Kunigunda, but could not for one reason or another. It is also possible, however, that this was a case of prostitution. Kunigunda had wandered with her parents until she was twelve or eighteen years old; she could not remember.[66] The employment as a maid in the farmer's household in Oberndorf was her first and began about forty years before her arrest (when she was twenty or a little younger). It is possible therefore that Pronner had learnt other means of survival than merely begging, including perhaps prostitution. The father of the second child may give one a clue. After she had spent a further three years begging, Kunigunda lodged with a man named Fritz, first in Burggriesbach and then 'Erasstorff'. Kunigunda seems to have been Fritz's mistress, but she was not in a very stable relationship with him. Whether or not she then had a legitimate income, she seems to have paid some of her way, her rent and board perhaps, in sexual favours, bearing Fritz's child before he 'went away'.[67] Kunigunda had to resort to begging again.[68]

After three more years begging, Kunigunda Pronner secured employment with a tanner in Berching. She began working for him in one autumn, but he died before Pentecost the following year.[69] Fortunately, the Widmans took her in. Berching was the home town of the father of her third child. He was a carter, and married.[70] It is not clear from her narrative whether she had been to Berching during her wanderings and conceived her child then, or if the sex and birth had occurred since she had been working for the tanner and subsequently the Widmans. Whatever the circumstances of the conception, the carter's adultery

[65] Ibid., Articles 4 and 5.
[66] Ibid., Article 4.
[67] Ibid., Articles 4 and 5.
[68] Ibid., Article 4.
[69] Ibid., Article 4.
[70] Ibid., Articles 4 and 5.

was with someone who was neither his social equal nor a member of his own household. One cannot discount love or rape as the motive for his sexual relations with Kunigunda. Given her past sexual and personal history, however, it is plausible that she had prostituted herself to the carter. Experience must have taught her to regard her circumstances as temporary and precarious. Until the Widmans gave her a job, Kunigunda's longest period of employment had been her first at just two years and that had ended about eleven years before she came to reside in Berching.[71] For Pronner sex may have been, during the instability of her teens and twenties, a means of survival whether this meant being a prostitute or a mistress.

Kunigunda Pronner was not the only witch-suspect to have had a dubious sexual past. Anna Harding recited a catalogue of sexual encounters which show that she had been a prostitute when she had lived in Swabia. She also revealed an intimate knowledge of another prostitute, Anna Maria, cook for the vicar of Eichstätt.[72] Of Harding, the witch commissioners made the observation at the beginning of her fifth session of interrogation, on the afternoon of 17 February 1618, 'that she went from poverty to unchastity and from unchastity to witchcraft'.[73] This succinct commentary could have applied equally to Pronner. Harding had prefaced her account of her seduction into the witch sect with brief descriptions of her sexual encounters with three clergymen. That with the first, Hans Jobst, had happened 'out of sheer and great poverty'.[74] She had then been seduced by the Devil in the form of the nobleman from Freihalden. The sex with Hans Jobst had occurred twenty-two years before her arrest, four years before she had emigrated to Eichstätt, when she would have been about forty-two.[75] When, on the afternoon of 10 March, she was describing how she was able to induce abortions, Harding began, without any apparent prompting from the interrogators, to list her male clients. From these episodes of prostitution it would appear that Harding had been unchaste for some thirty years, since she was about thirty-four, and that she had continued to practice this vice after she moved to Eichstätt, although

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[71] Ibid., Article 4.
[72] StAN, Hexenakten 48 (A. Harding), 17 February 1618 (a.m.) and 10 March 1618 (p.m.).
[73] Ibid., 17 February 1618 (p.m.).
[74] Ibid., 17 February 1618 (a.m.).
[75] Ibid., 10 March 1618 (p.m.).

details of her local clients are not recorded in the trial transcripts.[76] All of this illicit sexual activity was placed by Harding in the context of her relationship with an unmarried cobbler's apprentice. He had promised to marry her in return for sex, but seems to have broken his word. This had been a decade before the first episodes of prostitution.[77] There is some confusion here, however, because Harding would have been about twenty-four at the time the apprentice had made his promise and therefore already married for six years.[78] This confusion was perhaps the result of approximating time under pressure.

Taken out of context, both Kunigunda Pronner and Anna Harding would seem to conform to the stereotype of the marginal old woman who fell victim to accusations of witchcraft. They were aged about sixty and sixty-four respectively and had a history of poverty and sexual indiscretion. Pronner was also one of the very few witch-suspects in the prince-bishopric of Eichstätt to be directly accused of witchcraft by a neighbour.[79] To interpret the experiences of these two women from the perspective of, for example, the Thomas-Macfarlane thesis is to impose late twentieth-century assumptions about early modern society onto the communities of Eichstätt without regard for the complexities of the local situation. When Pronner arrived in Berching she presumably did so to beg, not because there was hope of employment. She may have been known as an occasional beggar in the town, but was in no sense integrated into it, and after three years of wandering in the wider region she probably also lacked references. Yet a tanner was willing to give her employment and when he died after a relatively short time, another couple came forward to give her a home. In the household of Urban and Anna Widman, Pronner began three decades of stability. Asked why she had retained Kunigunda's services for so long, Anna Widman replied: 'because she works willingly, and she has her instead of her daughter, because she has none' (Widman's only daughter had died in infancy).[80] She also stated that her maid was pious, although she must

[76] To the question 'with whom she had do here in Eichstätt?', she answered 'what she reported…about the knavery she committed, that is not incorporated in this transcript', ibid., 10 March 1618 (p.m.).

[77] Ibid., 10 March 1618 (p.m.).

[78] Harding had married aged eighteen, ibid., 19 January 1618.

[79] StAN, Hexenakten 48 (K. Pronner—preliminary investigation), Special Interrogatory, Article 5.

[80] Ibid., (A. Widman—preliminary investigation), Special Interrogatory, Article 13. Widman had six sons and one daughter by her first husband, ibid., General

have known about the carter's child.[81] Anna's bond with Kunigunda was, in fact, so strong that she hardly implicated her in her testimony, even though Kunigunda had broken under questioning by the Berching authorities and confirmed to them that her employer was a witch.[82] When Widman was confronted by Pronner in Eichstätt, she merely repeated the facts of the accusation laid against them both, but did not confess that either herself or her maid were witches.[83] In addition, Kunigunda did not feature in Anna's voluntary list of accomplices; the interrogators had to ask her directly whether Kunigunda was a witch.[84] Here one has an employer standing by her maid rather than leaving her to her fate.

The case documentation also shows that Pronner was never the sole target of the original accusation. She had certainly thrown water over a boy and allegedly caused his death, but the boy's taunts had been directed at both Kunigunda and Anna (he had called them 'witches' and broken three window-panes in Anna's house), and his mother's accusation was laid against the two women together.[85] Anna was either seventy or eighty years old, depending on which of the Berching and Eichstätt sources records the correct information,[86] and it may be that among the children of Berching the two old women were held to be witches together. There is, however, an alternative explanation. The boy who died was the son of the provost of Berching.[87] This was the same person who, with one Dr Memminger, conducted the original

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Interrogatory, Article 6. She had then had three sons by Urban Widman, StAN, Hexenakten 48 (A. Widman), 9 July 1618 (a.m.).

[81] StAN, Hexenakten 48 (A. Widman—preliminary investigation), Special Interrogatory, Article 11.

[82] Pronner must have named Widman as a witch after she had been taken to Eichstätt. During the preliminary investigation in Berching, she had maintained that her mistress was pious, StAN, Hexenakten 48 (K. Pronner—preliminary investigation), Special Interrogatory, Article 14. The transcript from Eichstätt is lost.

[83] StAN, Hexenakten 48 (A. Widman), 13 July 1618 (a.m.).

[84] Widman replied 'because she [Pronner] danced, it must follow that she is a witch', ibid., 4 September 1618 (p.m.). This is an ambiguous answer in which Widman seems reluctant to denounce her maid. This was the last substantial session of Widman's trial. She had not been interrogated since the morning of 21 August 1618, and was only subjected to two short sessions before her execution on 15 September 1618.

[85] StAN, Hexenakten 48 (A. Widman—preliminary investigation), Special Interrogatory, Articles 9 and 10, and (K. Pronner—preliminary investigation), Special Interrogatory, Article 3.

[86] StAN, Hexenakten 48 (A. Widman—preliminary investigation), General Interrogatory, Article 2, and (A. Widman), 9 July 1618 (a.m.).

[87] Ibid., 9 July 1618 (a.m.).

examination of the accused.[88] It was the provost's wife, therefore, who had laid the charge against them. This whole episode was tainted by the bias of the provost's intimate associations with the victim and the accuser, his deceased son and his distraught wife. Urban Widman, Anna's husband, seems to have been an equally important local character. He had been a successful baker and in his retirement continued to derive an income from his former business.[89] Perhaps there was some friction between factions of roughly equal social, if not political or economic, status in and around Berching as there was in both Salem and Rye.[90] If the elite of Berching had been untouched by deep divisions, then it is difficult to see how this case would have been allowed to proceed. Until she finally broke under the pressure of questioning, Anna's attitude suggests a degree of animosity between members of this group. She seems to have been contemptuous of the individuals who had brought the accusation and then handed her over to the witch commissioners. When the accusation was read out to her by the Berching authorities, Anna stated that she could not believe that the lad would die from water poured over him. She also suggested that he already had a wasting disease.[91] When the Eichstätt authorities asked her why young people in the street called her a witch, she observed, somewhat sarcastically, that 'she knows very well that the old people must be witches'.[92] Although this was a commentary on the injustice of the equation of old women and witches, Anna's interrogators seem by their observations in the margin of the interrogation transcript to have taken her words literally.[93]

Like Kunigunda Pronner, the prostitute Anna Harding does not seem, at the time of her arrest, to have been a social outcast from her

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[88] StAN, Hexenakten 48 (A. Widman—preliminary investigation), General Interrogatory, and (K. Pronner—preliminary investigation), General Interrogatory.

[89] StAN, Hexenakten 48 (A. Widman), 9 July 1618 (a.m.).

[90] I should reiterate here that this case had its origins in Berching. Although it was prosecuted by the witch commissioners in the town of Eichstätt, it had nothing to do with the persecution there from 1617–31, nor did it precipitate an escalation of trials in the outlying districts. It should therefore be considered as an isolated case like those which occurred during the years of non-persecution in the prince-bishopric.

[91] StAN, Hexenakten 48 (A. Widman—preliminary investigation), Special Interrogatory, Article 12.

[92] StAN, Hexenakten 48 (A. Widman), 9 July 1618 (a.m.).

[93] The scribe copied Widman's words into the margin of the transcript, ibid., 9 July 1618 (a.m.). The scribes only usually made notes of incriminating evidence in the margins, which would suggest that one of the interrogators (in this case Herr vom Stein or Dr Freisinger) thought that this fact was pertinent.

community. It is not clear what her husband, Jobst, had done for a living, but he had managed to send his only child to Venice in the employ of a merchant from Nuremberg.[94] Apart from her prostitution, Harding was also a known wisewoman who used herbs to cause abortions for indiscreet young women, many from the households of councillors, and to then help them get pregnant. Given the information that she did finally provide about some of these women, it is unlikely that they would have supported any accusation of witchcraft against Harding which originated within the community rather than in the interrogation process. Indeed, when listing her accomplices, she observed that Barbara Rabel and Eva Susanna Moringer had attempted to make her promise not to denounce them.[95] Rabel had supplied her with 'much good drink' in custody as a bribe against this.[96] Harding was not a gossip of the women of the Eichstätt elite who bore the brunt of the local witch persecutions—she did not appear in their confessions in the same contexts as their friends—but she retained powerful connections with them as a healer and, through her other unnamed clients as a prostitute, their husbands. She seems, instead, to have been part of the lower social class to which Anna Maria, the vicar's cook belonged.

Anna Maria also tried to prevent Harding denouncing her, but not because of the medical help which she may have received from her.[97] The vicar's cook was also a local prostitute who had previously worked at this profession in Augsburg and elsewhere. When asked directly about Anna Maria, Harding said that she knew nothing of witchcraft, but did of her whoremongering: the cook had Jeronius the *Waagmeister* (master of the town scales) among her clients; and Hans Christoph Thiermayr, the son of the vice-chancellor, to whom she had given 'the key to the house [the vicar's?] that he could come and go by day and night'.[98] Later, of course, Harding did denounce Anna Maria as a witch.[99] Incorporation into the community of urban women for the medical skills and other knowledge she might have possessed meant that Harding was not considered a marginalized figure in Eichstätt. It

[94] StAN, Hexenakten 48 (A. Harding), 19 January 1618 (p.m.).
[95] Ibid., 18 June 1618 (a.m.).
[96] Ibid., 18 June 1618 (a.m.).
[97] Harding did not want to report her 'because she so often begged her not to name her', ibid., 18 June 1618 (a.m.).
[98] Ibid., 10 March 1618 (p.m.).
[99] Ibid., 18 June 1618 (a.m.).

was probably for this reason that she was among the first witch-suspects named or arrested in Eichstätt, and why she came to the attention of the witch commissioners in exactly the same way as her higher-class neighbours through a process of accumulated denunciations.[100] Anna Maria seems not to have been denounced a sufficient number of times; she was not arrested as a witch.

Whilst a woman might have been driven to prostitution by her economic status, a reputation for whoremongering might not have entirely sullied her honour and pushed her to the margins of a community. Like the witch commissioners, the Widmans and Kunigunda Pronner's other employers seem to have understood the direct connection between poverty and prostitution, and they ignored the reputation which no doubt followed her and could easily attach itself to the household (if interpretations of early modern social discourse are accurate). Other prostitutes were accepted in small communities if they provided other services (procuring abortions, for example) or if they were discreet, as both Anna Harding and the vicar's cook seem to have been. None of the three women in the principality who resorted to prostitution was compelled to remain in that lifestyle. Whilst they might not have married into the social elite, they were either respected by their employers and neighbours (like Pronner and Harding) or worked in respectable households (like Anna Maria); and their sexual activities did not make them any more likely to be denounced either by self-confessed victims of malevolent witchcraft or by neighbours already under interrogation as witch-suspects. Unlike pre-marital sex and adultery (motivated by shared emotions of love or lust, or the hope of marriage), however, prostitution in Eichstätt was exclusively a female sexual sin, a financial transaction in which the woman sold her body and her honour for a fee. One trial transcript does, however, hint at a predominantly male sexual vice, that of bestiality.

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[100] Harding was confronted by the witches Catharina Ströbl and Anna Beck, ibid., 20 January 1618 (p.m.) and 15 February 1618 (p.m.). She was numbered fifty-four among Beck's accomplices, all named during the same session of interrogation almost a fortnight before Harding's arrest, StAN, Hexenakten 48 (A. Beck), 6 February 1618 (a.m.), and (A. Harding), 19 February 1618 (a.m.). It is unlikely that Beck had been given a list of names to confirm.

Bestiality and incest

Bestiality is a sensitive subject which has received little attention in scholarly research. Keith Thomas has cited some contemporary commentaries on and laws against the practice in *Man and the Natural World* (1983) alongside the data produced by James Sharpe and that which can be gathered from the assize calendars edited by J.S. Cockburn.[101] Thomas's observation that it cannot have been a frequent crime should be considered in the context of Liliequist's study of bestiality in early modern Sweden. His research shows that in some places and at some times, the crime was widely prosecuted.[102] Bestiality was, of course, proscribed by the church and secular authorities alike, and as an unnatural sexual activity was long ascribed to heretical sects, usually as the kiss of shame.[103] It should not be a surprise, therefore, that an occasional confession of sex with livestock appears, unsolicited, in early modern witch-trial transcripts, especially as most young men had contact with animals as owners, herdsmen, carters or butchers. Immediately before telling his interrogators how he had got a maid pregnant, Georg Gutmann had confessed to two other more serious crimes, sex 'not only with horses, but also with cattle' and the theft of some grain from his family.[104] None of the three crimes confessed during this session of questioning were connected by Gutmann or his interrogators with his activities as a witch. In the previous session he had concluded his account of his harmful witchcraft and when he returned to the interrogation chamber the next day, 31 January 1618,

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[101] Keith Thomas, *Man and the Natural World: Changing Attitudes in England 1500–1800* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1984), pp. 39, 97–8, 119, 317 (n. 25), and 347 (n. 145).

[102] In the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, there were over 1500 prosecutions for bestiality in Sweden, compared to less than a dozen for homosexuality, Liliequist, "Peasants against Nature", pp. 57–60. As Liliequist observes, this constitutes a much higher volume of prosecution over a much longer period of time than in the Swiss canton of Fribourg, the regions of France under the jurisdiction of the parlement of Paris, the Netherlands or the Danish province of Viborg, p. 60, n. 5.

[103] The connection between bestiality and witchcraft has been observed in Switzerland by E. William Monter, "La sodomie à l'epoque moderne en Suisse Romande", *Annales*, 29 (1974), pp. 1023–33. In this case the buggering of animals led to homage to the Devil and then to witchcraft. Liliequist found no similar connection in Sweden, Liliequist, "Peasants against Nature", p. 65. I have argued that the kiss of shame should be seen as a dishonourably sexual act as well as an act of fealty, Durrant, "The *Osculum Infame*".

[104] StAN, Hexenakten 48 (G. Gutmann), 31 January 1618 (a.m.).

he was asked simply how he had sinned further.[105] In the context of the interrogation process, the witch commissioners had begun tidying up the details of Gutmann's confession. He was only called in for another five sessions of interrogation between the afternoon of 31 January and the morning of 10 February.[106] These sessions were short and concerned his seduction by his mother and the alleged murder of his wife as well as confirming the *relatio*. Whether they really had happened, the bestiality, the theft, and the maid's pregnancy were part of Gutmann's final spiritual confession before his death, events for which he would have to do penance in the days immediately before his execution on 16 February.[107] The bestiality had, he claimed, occurred when he was still quite young and he was lodging with a horseherd. Gutmann did not confess that he continued this practice beyond his youthful sexual experimentation. Its appearance in his confession does, however, extend the range of possible sexual experiences gathered by individuals in what was quite a small region.

To Gutmann's confession of sex with horses and cattle, one can add the confession of attempted paedophilia and the sexual abuse of suspected witches in custody which emerge from the investigation into the activities of the town hall staff. I will discuss these incidences in chapter 7. One can, however, exclude the confessions of incest which appear in the witches' testimonies from the range of known sexual activities found among the inhabitants of Eichstätt. This is not to say that incest was not practised in the principality. Ulinka Rublack has documented cases of incest and the debates about this crime in early modern Germany and it would be reasonable to assume that in places like Eichstätt it formed a very small part of the 'dark figure' of crime which was unreported or only informally punished.[108] The only confessions we have of it in the interrogation transcripts were produced under the guidance of the witch commissioners. Georg Gutmann's first attempt to construct a story of seduction, on 28 January 1618, was confused. When he was small and young his mother had taken him to

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[105] Ibid., 30 January 1618 (a.m.) and 31 January 1618 (a.m.).

[106] Ibid., 31 January 1618 (p.m.), 1 February 1618 (a.m.), 3 February 1618 (p.m.), 5 February 1618 (a.m.), and 10 February 1618 (a.m.).

[107] Ibid., back cover.

[108] Rublack, *The Crimes of Women in Early Modern Germany*, pp. 231–54. The dark figure of crime is discussed by J.A. Sharpe in his introductory text, *Crime in Early Modern England 1550–1750* (London: Longman, 1984), pp. 42–8. His comments would apply to any criminal statistics drawn from anywhere in early modern Europe.

a gathering on the Wascheggerten where he had promised himself to the Devil. His mother had appeared to him in the form of a man and then in that of a woman, and she was described by the witch commissioners as his paramour.[109] There was, however, no further explicit suggestion of sex in Gutmann's confession at this point. Indeed, his first diabolical sexual experience occurred later when the Devil came and laid on his bed in the form of another woman, not his mother.[110] When early in February the interrogators were reviewing his confession, they asked supplementary questions which led Gutmann to testify 'that he was meant to have had sex with her [his mother]'.[111] He confirmed his 'dishonour' with her during the next, penultimate session of interrogation.[112] In this case, as in others, it was the commissioners who shaped the testimony to turn a confession of moral corruption by a mother into sexual corruption and incest.

Conclusion

Before the election of Westerstetten to the episcopal throne, the cathedral chapter had not attempted to police the sex lives of its citizens too closely. Successive bishops had been selective in the implementation of the decrees of the Council of Trent and prevented the social disruption which they could cause by excluding the Society of Jesus from the prince-bishopric and distancing themselves as far as possible from the reforming tendencies of Maximilian of Bavaria. Westerstetten's appointment signalled the end of a tolerant attitude towards many local cultural practices, including *Fastnacht* and disorderly craft processions. There is also evidence that couples were being encouraged to regularize their marriages, rather than drifting along living together as some had done previously. After 1613 there were almost no couples cohabiting without performing the correct set of marriage rituals in the two parishes of the town of Eichstätt. This probably happened as a consequence of disciplining errant couples, ensuring that the law was promulgated effectively, the rigorous use of visitations and preaching on the subject. When they began persecuting witches as part of a wider

[109] StAN, Hexenakten 48 (G. Gutmann), 28 January 1618 (p.m.).
[110] Ibid., 28 January 1618 (p.m.).
[111] Ibid., 3 February 1618 (p.m.).
[112] Ibid., 5 February 1618 (a.m.).

reform programme, it is not surprising that the witch commissioners were offered stories of seduction and celebration which revealed a range of recently tolerated sexual practices which the authorities now wanted to eradicate. Whilst the inhabitants of Eichstätt did tolerate a degree of sexual licence, however, they were not always able to deal with the consequences of it, unwanted pregnancies.

CHAPTER SIX

HEALTH

If marriage was not an expectation in a relationship, then a pregnant woman had three possible courses of action: she could have the child and hope for the best; she could attempt to abort the child; or she could kill it at birth. It is difficult to determine the rate of infant murder in Eichstätt. Only one case of infanticide seems to have been prosecuted successfully between 1603 and 1627.[1] The rate of single motherhood is likewise difficult to uncover, as are the local attitudes towards it. Motherhood seems to have made Kunigunda Pronner's situation more precarious than it had been, keeping her out of employment. Her situation only stabilized after the death of her third child, and then through the employment offered by Anna Widman. What the witch-trial transcripts do reveal, however, is the presence of at least one woman in the community who possessed a reputation for terminating unwanted pregnancies. This woman, Anna Harding, had other medical skills too. The transcripts also show that women of all classes used folk medicine as a complement or in preference to the prescriptions of authorized medical practitioners like barbers and physicians. Another medical figure who dominates the earlier interrogations of 1617 to 1619 is the midwife. This is partly because at least two among the first witch-suspects arrested at that time were practising midwives, partly because midwives entered one confession as the godmothers of the suspect, and partly because midwives possessed knowledge of where the bodies of children's corpses were buried.

[1] Margretha N. (known as Brot Wölffin) had had sex 'with persons of easy virtue' at Schernfeld and borne a male child in a cowstall. Margretha had then thrown the baby down a farmer's well or water-hole where it had been found eight days later, DiöAE, "Urfehdebuch", ff. 57r–58r. The date of this case is not given, but it immediately precedes that of Hans Öder who was executed on 2 September 1606, ibid., ff. 58v–60r.

Healing

From her own testimony, it would appear that Anna Harding was trusted as a healer by the women of Eichstätt. Her particular skill, as she informed her interrogators, was to control menstruation in women, both married and 'young' (meaning unmarried);[2] she could reduce its flow where it was too heavy or induce it where it 'failed to materialize'.[3] This she accomplished by dispensing advice that certain herbs ('Alamander', 'Muselblue' and 'Galgans') be taken mixed in a drink an appropriate number of times.[4] Occasionally there was a medical reason why a young woman's periods ceased. The daughters of Father Johann Reichard's cook and Margretha Hözler both sought Harding's advice because they had 'lost' their periods at times of fever.[5] It may be, however, that such explanations for the cessation of menstruation were mere pretexts for securing an abortion. Hözler's daughter was also listed by Harding among those unmarried women whom she had helped because they were concerned that they might be pregnant.[6] The others included Silbereis's daughter, Maria Mayr, Valtin Lanng's maid with the red frizzy hair who had slept with a cobbler, the daughter of a bricklayer of Obereichstätt, and Eva (daughter of the Old Spiegel and wife of Biebel Lenz).[7] Several of these women were arrested for witchcraft. Eva Lenz, for example, would have been the Biebel Lenzin who had allegedly had sex with Paul Gabler at a nocturnal gathering of witches; and Maria Mayr's case is the subject of the next chapter.

Whilst Harding seems to have had no problem helping young unmarried women with their menstrual problems, her attitude to potential clients who were married seems to have been mixed. Harding claimed to have refused to aid the gravedigger's wife who had also come to her wanting an abortion. Harding's alleged words to this woman are vague and difficult to interpret: 'You have a husband, and may perhaps have

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[2] StAN, Hexenakten 48 (A. Harding), 21 February 1618 (a.m.).
[3] Ibid., 21 February 1618 (a.m.).
[4] Ibid., 21 February 1618 (a.m.). It is difficult to determine what plants these might be. 'Galgans' might, however, be a local name for the mandrake as that plant is associated with both the gallows and medicine.
[5] Ibid., 21 February 1618 (a.m.).
[6] Ibid., 18 June 1618 (a.m.).
[7] Ibid., 21 February 1618 (a.m.), 10 March 1618 (p.m.), 14 March 1618 (p.m.), and 18 June 1618 (a.m.).

a large body, and because of that want to abort the birth'.[8] One could argue, for example, that the words hint at adultery: the wife needed to abort the foetus because it did not belong to the husband. Or perhaps she did not want any more children. Whatever the woman's motive, Harding's refusal to help was based on the fact that she already had a husband whose presence could legitimate any birth. The same marital circumstances did not, however, prevent Harding from helping Barbara Apotheker. Secretly (outside Apotheker's butcher's shop), she gave Barbara herbs which would stop 'her husband's thing', his penis, operating.[9] In dealing with her clients, therefore, Harding seems to have worked to her own ethical code. She had no moral problem helping unmarried women to abort foetuses, and she does not seem to have been short of clients for advice on this practice. This suggests that in the moral economy of the town, which was based on pragmatic solutions to temporal problems, women regarded abortion, at least through herbal medicine, with less abhorrence than bearing the illegitimate offspring of men whom they did not, perhaps, expect to marry. Possibly the women who sought Harding out also took comfort in the idea that abortion prior to the moment of quickening was not murder because the foetus did not yet have a soul, although Harding did not refer to this possible understanding of her activities.

To the witch commissioners the abortions, regardless of the predicament of the girl involved and the theology which underpinned quickening, seem to have been nothing but murder which would explain why they persistently returned to Harding's activities as an abortionist. Harding must have been aware of the interrogators' view of her activities. She had begun to tell of them in response to the admonition: 'one does not want to know what good she did, but she should tell what evil she caused, and whom she murdered with her art and diabolical work, of which one has good knowledge that she has given drink to young people and others many times, doubtless to no good purpose'.[10] In her subsequent tales of helping women with their menstrual problems, Harding revealed her understanding of the ambiguous moral status of abortion. She was careful to maintain, however, that what she had done

[8] Ibid., 10 March 1618 (p.m.). This is the only occasion in Harding's confession when she seems to have used the verb 'to abort' ('abtreiben').
[9] Ibid., 4 May 1618 (a.m.).
[10] Ibid., 21 February 1618 (a.m.).

was not diabolical in origin.[11] In Harding's descriptions of the abortions one can identify an ongoing conflict between pre- and post-Tridentine Catholicism, between secular pragmatism and strident religiosity, which the prince-bishop's new footsoldiers (the Jesuits, the organizers of the lay confraternities and the witch commissioners) could only hope to win by forceful means. In this respect the attack on witches was clearly linked not only to the contemporary vigorous suppression of *Fastnacht* and similar celebrations, but also to the rooting out of traditional practical, if illicit, solutions to personal dilemmas.[12]

Whether Harding also understood the gravity of her attempt to make Apotheker impotent is not clear. That she helped his wife at all suggests that she regarded the hindrance of generation by men as within the community's moral compass. It was one example of the precautions and prophylactics probably sought by many couples or wives hoping to avoid pregnancy and may not have been as morally ambiguous as the abortion of what would, in the case of the gravedigger's wife, have been regarded as a legitimate child.[13] It is interesting that the witch commissioners did not try to diabolize the attempt to cause impotence. In the demonology of Heinrich Kramer, for example, dismemberment and other means of preventing a man from performing sexually were prominent among the harmful activities of the witch.[14] If the interrogators had forced Harding to translate the herbal remedy into a diabolical powder in this instance, this would have been the only extant case of a man being made impotent by witchcraft in Eichstätt. In fact the commissioners did not force Harding to diabolize her activities as an abortionist either. Like much of the prostitution to which she

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[11] Although she was describing morally dubious and criminal actions, Harding denied, in answer to a specific question about it, that she used diabolical ointments and powder in her medicine, ibid., 21 February 1618 (a.m.).

[12] It was no doubt also related to local decrees against unsuitable marriages, idle servants, drinking during worship and fornication among single people, such as "Benewal beuelch in alle deß Stiffts Eÿstett Ambter abgangen datirt den 2 Octob Ao 1620. 1. Der Ehehalten Vnzeittig aussehen. 2. abschaffung Vnnutzen gesindleins vnd 3. Trinckhens vnder dem Gottesdienst. 4. Auch *fornicationes* der ledigen Personen vnd dero straffen bet.", in Hochstift Eichstätt Literalien 59 "Kopialbuch, die unter Bischof Martin und seinen Nachfolgen erlassenen Generalbefehle und Ausschreibungen enthaltend. 1457–1626", ff. 372v–373r.

[13] For brief examples of contraception in practice, see Rublack, *The Crimes of Women in Early Modern Germany*, p. 148, and Henry Kamen, *European Society 1500–1700* (London: Routledge, 1998), pp. 30–1.

[14] Kramer, *Malleus*, II/1,6–7, pp. 417–28.

confessed, the abortions were already a serious enough crime without the addition of the Devil.[15]

The witch commissioners did, however, attempt to look further into the three deaths of children which Anna Harding described when she was first asked what harm she had done with her diabolical ointment and powder. She had already voluntarily ascribed the deaths of a small selection of livestock (cattle and pigs) to her use of such substances which she said that she had helped to make from the eucharist. As the owner of these animals, she was the victim of her own malevolence, and all but one of these murders had happened whilst she was still resident in her home town of Jettingen.[16] Independent witnesses were unnecessary in these instances. In contrast, the children who died at Harding's hand were not her own. Two of them had been brought to her by their mothers (one from the town of Eichstätt and the other from the village of Adelschlag); the third she seems to have visited in the parents' home, also in the town.[17] In Harding's narrative, the mothers had clearly sought her help because she had a reputation for healing. In these cases, she had been unsuccessful in curing the children. Given the quality of medical knowledge at this time, it is not surprising that a healer acknowledged some failures. That the children had died suited Harding's purpose at this point in her confession narrative, to supply enough relevant information to forestall the application of further torture. Harding did not, however, state that any of the deaths were the result of witchcraft—in each case she had smeared an ointment on an already sick child, but it had died[18]—nor did she confess that she had acted out of enmity (indeed, the mothers had sought her out) or at the instigation of the Devil. The witch commissioners were left to infer these details for themselves.

When the interrogators looked for witnesses, however, they encountered difficulties which Harding may have anticipated. The father of the first child whom she had treated about two years before her arrest was himself now dead. Yet the scribe recorded in the margin to the transcript 'befindt sich' ('found'; 'confirmed'), without stating how the

[15] In the *Constitutio criminalis Carolina* of 1532, abortion carried the death penalty, Evans, *Rituals of Retribution*, p. 29.
[16] StAN, Hexenakten 48 (A. Harding), 19 February 1618 (a.m.).
[17] Ibid., 20 February 1618 (a.m.).
[18] Ibid., 20 February 1618 (a.m.).

commissioners had reached that conclusion.[19] The witnesses to the second death were either also deceased or keeping a low profile, or the commissioners were unable or unwilling to send someone to Adelschlag with a summons. No judgement is recorded for this alleged crime. In the case of the third death, the interrogators were provided with very few substantial details. Harding claimed that five years previously she had attempted to cure a tall baker's daughter who was then eight years old and lived in the Western Quarter.[20] At first Harding confessed that she had died. On further questioning, she said that she couldn't be sure if she was dead.[21] At that point the interrogators drew the session to an end. There were numerous bakers in Eichstätt, many of whom lived in the Western Quarter, and presumably many more daughters of bakers (see Appendix 2). Faced with a lack of detail, the suspect's determination not to add to her testimony on this point, and the probable reluctance of witnesses to come forward, the commissioners simply had to give up any attempt to substantiate the claim of murder. Despite her many self-confessed capital offences as a healer, therefore, Anna Harding was convicted of several counts of harmful witchcraft against her own livestock and only one (dubious) count of harmful witchcraft against others.

Other suspects' confessions of acts of malevolent witchcraft follow much the same structure as those offered by Anna Harding. Livestock and children bore the brunt of the witch's alleged malice, although neighbours might sometimes also be attacked. In many cases the human victims were already sick and the witch merely hastened an inevitable death. Frequently these victims were also relatives of the aggressor, and the harmed livestock would often belong to the witch too. Enmity was rarely cited as a motive to attack others—the few instances where it was I have discussed in chapter 3 and even in these the victims do

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[19] Ibid., 20 February 1618 (a.m.). The scribes were inconsistent about the details they recorded in the margins beside the confessions of malevolent witchcraft after the interrogation of witnesses. In the case of Barbara Haubner, the scribe sometimes wrote 'befindt sich nit' or 'befindt sich'. Occasionally he added further information. Next to Haubner's confession that she had killed the tall Liendel's daughter at six weeks, the scribe noted 'confirmed, but it had only been three weeks old', StAN, Hexenakten 48 (B. Haubner), 3 February 1618 (p.m.).

[20] This was not the same tall baker's wife, Elisabeth Deth, who lived in the Eastern Quarter and was executed on 10 April 1620, DiöAE, "Urfehdebuch", ff. 181v–182v.

[21] StAN, Hexenakten 48 (A. Harding), 20 February 1618 (a.m.). Harding's amended testimony was not recorded in the transcript of this session of interrogation, but added to the margin by the scribe at a later date.

not seem to have thought that they had been attacked out of malice. As I also observed in the same chapter, witchcraft was unlikely to be identified as the cause of one's misfortune. If the trial transcripts do not tell us about communal conflicts which led to aggression through witchcraft or other means, they do inform us about medical practice and community bonds.

Anna Harding was a healer. She was not a cunning or wisewoman like Magdalena Pößl who confirmed that Jesse Vockher's child had been killed by Georg Claßner's wife. She did not perform any of the ancillary functions of such an individual (finding lost objects, divination or unwitching), nor did she employ spells, blessings or amulets. What she offered was the pharmaceutical advice one would expect from a chemist or herbalist. She prescribed herbs which had a proven record for the job in hand. I have not been able to identify 'Alamander', Harding's herb of preference for inducing menstrual flow.[22] It may have been a plant similar to alexanders (horse parsley). According to Nicholas Culpeper, alexanders 'is usually sown in all the gardens in Europe, and so well known, that it needs no further description'.[23] Among its many virtues, he recorded that 'it is good to move women's courses, to expel the after-birth, to break wind, to provoke urine, and helpeth the strangury';[24] it was to be taken for medicinal purposes bruised in a little wine. Harding advised her clients to take the same or a similar common herb for at least one of the conditions noted by Culpeper (restoring menstrual flow) and in the same method. Whilst she might have obtained the herb for a client, however, she did not prepare it for them. That was a job which required no great skill or secrecy and could be left to the woman concerned. Despite the social and gender distances between the Eichstätt prostitute and healer and the London

[22] 'Alamander' cannot be the plant allamanda as that was only named after a Swiss botanist of the eighteenth century. It is also not a name which occurs in either dictionaries of early modern German, for example, *Frühneuhochdeutsches Glossar*, ed. Alfred Götze (7th ed., Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1967), or histories of herbal medicine, such as Dieter Beckmann and Barbara Beckmann, *Alraun, Beifuß und andere Hexenkräuter. Alltagswissen vergangener Zeiten* (Frankfurt am Main/New York: Campus, 1990). There have been a whole range of plants which were once held to perform similar contraceptive or abortive functions. For an account of these, see, John M. Riddle, *Contraception and Abortion from the Ancient World to the Renaissance* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1992).

[23] Nicholas Culpeper, *Culpeper's Complete Herbal* (1653; repr. London: Bloomsbury Books, 1992), p. 16.

[24] Ibid., p. 16.

astrologer and physician, they drew on a common stock of knowledge which was more closely tied to medicine in its prescriptions and practices than to folklore.[25]

The descriptions given by Harding and other female witch-suspects of their malevolence towards children also suggest that certain forms of medical knowledge, which were either known among local gossips or accessible through healers like Harding, were being diabolized in the construction of the confession narratives. Harding herself confessed that she had killed two children brought to her for healing. This last detail, that the mothers brought their children to her, is unique in the Eichstätt material; usually the witch-suspect claimed that she had gone to the children. Both of the children seen by Harding were ill and, as the mothers no doubt expected, she rubbed ointment on them. In the confession, however, the healing action permitted the deception by which Harding managed to bring about the children's deaths. Here one has a conflation of two images, the healer and the witch which is reminiscent of the conflation of the lover and the witch in the stories of diabolical seduction. Both touched the body in exactly the same way to affect the health of the patient/victim. There were, after all, few other alternatives to hands-on and herbal medicine or secret, yet non-violent, physical harm.

In other confession narratives, too, a diabolical gloss barely conceals stories of unsuccessful attempts to heal sick children. Among the nineteen acts of harmful witchcraft to which Walburga Knab confessed between July 1621 and February 1622, for example, two were perpetrated against children living in her household who were already sick. Her son Lorenzlein, aged five, had been suffering from smallpox and she confessed to strewing her diabolical powder in his bed so that he would die, which happened the following night.[26] After describing how she killed the eight-week-old infant of a soldier quartered on her household by scattering her powder on him, she observed that he had already lain ill for a long time beforehand.[27] Margretha Bittelmayr, too, confessed to killing sick children with her diabolical powder. One of

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[25] Rublack, for example, also cites the case of Elisabetha Eggenmann of Constance who was treated by several healers (including a former executioner, a female healer and a civic doctor) for misdiagnosed conditions which turned out to be pregnancy, Rublack, *The Crimes of Women in Early Modern Germany*, pp. 174–5. These treatments were prescribed in much the same way as those by Harding and Culpeper.

[26] StAN, Hexenakten 45 (W. Knab), 30 July 1621 (a.m.).

[27] Ibid., 6 August 1621 (a.m.).

these was her daughter Cecilia who had lain ill for thirty-six weeks.[28] The other two were sons of Haimen Enderlin: Thoma, who was ill with smallpox; and six-week-old Michaelin who lay all miserable on a cushion.[29] In other cases, suspects claimed to have murdered or, more often, harmed adult neighbours by smearing chests, stomachs, eyes, heads or legs with their ointments. Here, too, one can see a basic method of healing beneath the demonological gloss imposed by the suspects' interrogators.

Whether or not these particular instances of harm were diabolizations of actual attempts to cure (or perhaps even mercifully kill) people or simply fictions, they were grounded in the ordinary experiences of women as mothers and neighbours. Women had an intimate knowledge of the deaths, illnesses and accidents which beset their own and other households and especially the children in them; and their experiences of pregnancy (their own and others) and birth, child-rearing and the nursing of the sick and elderly provided an equally intimate knowledge of the body, its weaknesses, strengths and transformations.[30] This accumulated knowledge facilitated a woman's role as the primary carer in the household and was an integral part of its economy. A proportion of this knowledge must have been learnt through a process of teaching as well as hands-on experience. Indeed, it is interesting to note that many witch-suspects claimed to have learnt their witch skills, the most prominent of which was the harm caused to neighbours (mainly children), not from the Devil or a demon, but from older women. Eva Susanna Moringer claimed, for example, that the Old Schweizerin had 'taught her that she should murder and do harm to livestock and people, for which she gave her a red ointment'. This was the same Old Schweizerin who, she claimed, had also allowed her to spend time with her lover, the huntsman, in her house when they were both single.[31] Although this relationship was partly diabolical and partly anti-social (from the perspective of a reform-minded clergy), it was founded on the normal processes by which a young woman became integrated into

[28] StAN, Hexenakten 45 (M. Bittelmayr), 17 October 1626 (a.m.).
[29] Ibid., 21 October 1626.
[30] Merry Wiesner has argued, for example, that it was this association of women with health within the household which facilitated the acceptance of midwives in the 'public sphere', Merry E. Wiesner, "The Midwives of South Germany and the Public/Private Dichotomy", in Hilary Marland (ed.), *The Art of Midwifery: Early Modern Midwives in Europe* (London: Routledge, 1994), pp. 77–94 (p. 89).
[31] StAN, Hexenakten 48 (E.S. Moringer), 15 February 1619 (p.m.).

the wider female community.[32] This means of sharing knowledge about health then not only sustained the local social and kin networks which I analysed when looking at food and feasting, it helped to create them.

Male witch-suspects, in contrast, only rarely confessed to attempting to physically harm their neighbours or their children. Although they were asked the same standard questions about their harmful witchcraft as the female suspects, Valtin Lanng, Peter Porzin and Hans Stigeliz, for example, did not confess to attacking any individual directly. Instead, male defendants tended to confess, in these examples exclusively, to killing livestock.[33] This livestock was not generally their own as it was when female defendants told of harming animals, but belonged to others. Among the seven acts of harm confessed by another male witch, Michael Hochenschildt, three were attacks on the livestock of other men, two of whom were in his debt and had exchanged 'evil words' with him; [34] the third had once hit him.[35] Hochenschildt did not confess to harming his own livestock. Here again one finds enmity in the witchcraft sources, but it is not the kind of animosity which invited an accusation of witchcraft to help resolve it. It does not therefore fit the stereotypical witchcraft narrative. One might, however, interpret the imaginary harmful magic directed against the livestock of these particular individuals as a revenge fantasy. In avenging the 'evil words' and the violence in this context, Hochenschildt was perhaps attempting to manipulate the narrative to restore his own honour and sense of manhood which may have been damaged after the original encounters.

The different responses to the same set of questions about malevolent witchcraft reflect gendered roles within the community. The female world was largely domestic and centred on the health of those within their own and their neighbours' households. Women had access to the bodies of individuals within the household and could at least imagine

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[32] In this context, one might also add the spinning bees in which women gathered together to work and gossip, and where they presumably also shared knowledge about love, health, housework, marriage, and so on. Lyndal Roper has noted that men sometimes accused the women who attended these gatherings of participating in orgies, Roper, *The Holy Household*, p. 179. In its structure therefore this kind of women's network differed little, both in practice and fantasy, from the imagined sabbaths attended by mainly female witches.

[33] StAN, Hexenakten 48 (V. Lanng), 29 August 1618 (p.m.), and Hexenakten 45 (P. Porzin), 15 September 1627 (p.m.), and (H. Stigeliz), 16 and 17 May 1628.

[34] StAN, Hexenakten 45 (M. Hochenschildt), 16 March 1628 (a.m.) and 21 March 1628 (p.m.).

[35] Ibid., 16 March 1628 (a.m.).

touching some of them in a way which might be interpreted as medical or diabolical depending on how one reads a confession narrative. When children were sick it was the mothers who sought advice from healers like Anna Harding, individuals with an intimate knowledge of the body and the herbs which might remedy maladies.[36] When they discussed the deaths of their own livestock, they seem to have been imaginatively attacking the welfare of the their own household; their concern was domestic and where these animals had actually died (of some natural cause) their deaths may have led to genuine hardship for the woman's family. Male witch-suspects did not interpret harmful witchcraft in terms of an attack on the welfare of the household and the health of its members. Instead, they chose to articulate its consequences through a discourse of economic exchange and honour. These were the public dimensions of the household unit embodied by its male figurehead.

Although they tended to adopt separate roles within it, men and women had to know what was happening throughout the household and about its connections with the external political, social and economic environments in order for it to function effectively, and there is evidence of this wider knowledge in the witch-trial transcripts. Although his testimony is unusual in the context of the male Eichstätt witch-suspects, Michael Hochenschildt did confess to three acts of fatal malevolent witchcraft against children. Two of his young victims were the children of his godfathers;[37] he could not name the third child victim, only its mother, the Näherin who lodged with Heinrich Sudelkoch.[38] In citing these instances of death, Hochenschildt demonstrated, unwittingly, that he had taken notice of what was going on in his neighbours' households. Godparentage was used to extend and strengthen neighbourhood ties and involved many male citizens in Eichstätt as both godfathers and godsons. It would have been an insensitive and unobservant man who could not recall the deaths of at least some of those he was called to watch over or who resided in the households of his godparents.

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[36] StAN, Hexenakten 48 (A. Harding), 20 February 1618 (a.m.).

[37] StAN, Hexenakten 45 (M. Hochenschildt), 21 March 1628 (a.m.). Hochenschildt was 'over fifty years old' at his arrest (ibid., 14 March 1628). These deaths occurred eight and nine years before this date respectively. It is possible therefore that his godfathers were still fathering their own children.

[38] Ibid., 21 March 1628 (a.m.).

The several instances in which female suspects confessed to killing the livestock of other men and women confirm that they too were knowledgeable about the public economic world of men, who owned which animals, where they were herded for pasture and by whom. Anna Beck, for example, confessed to killing animals belonging to three others (the master of the Spital, a man called the Uglin of Ochsenfeld, and her godfather Thoma) on four occasions. After interrogating the witnesses, the commissioners discounted two instances of these animal deaths: the master of the Spital had had a black, not a red, cow which had become ill, but it did not die; and Thoma told of a black cow and its calf which remained together, not of a red cow which died.[39] What the confessions of malevolent witchcraft do highlight are the areas of responsibility within the early modern household and the concerns which were uppermost in the minds of the men and women who ran them. These common responsibilities, together with family ties and more formal associations (in guilds, councils and confraternities), led to the formation of female and male networks of neighbours such as those I have discussed already in the context of Margretha Bittelmayr's wedding trip, drinking among men and the entries into cellars.

One should not be surprised, therefore, that most of the women whom the healer Anna Harding claimed to have treated lived in households which contained one or more witch-suspects. Maria Mayr was already in custody when Harding confessed to helping her with her menstrual problems. Members of the other households from which her female clients came were also later arrested for witchcraft: Father Johann Reichard, Margretha Hözler and her daughter Joanna, Barbara Silbereis, Valtin Lanng and his wife, and Barbara Apotheker.[40] None of these witch-suspects was arrested for procuring an abortion or abetting their maids or daughters in this crime; they were all denounced by each other and other witch-suspects under intense interrogation. They formed part of a network of households linked by marriage, craft and local political power, and it was in these households that female and male networks of neighbours and kin overlapped. Given that women looked after the physical welfare of the household members and that

[39] StAN, Hexenakten 48 (A. Beck), 3 February 1618 (a.m.). The failure of the witnesses to corroborate Beck's testimony does not mean that Beck had got her facts wrong.

[40] Joanna Hözler, the only one of these witches not yet discussed, was executed on 27 September 1624, DiöAE, "Urfehdebuch", ff. 217v–218r.

Harding's primary skill was the control of menstruation, one can plausibly argue that she was a point of focus for female neighbourhood networks. Her reputation was probably reinforced by gossip among women, and supported by verbal testimonials from those whom she had helped successfully in the management of their households or the protection of their sexual honour. That three women sought to persuade Harding not to name them in her confession would seem to confirm this. Harding was, however, also a person in whom male and female networks in the community again overlapped. At the same time that she was dispensing advice on health and abortion, she seems to have been selling her body to some of the married men of Eichstätt who at least lived in the same class of household as her female clients even if they did not reside in those very ones.

Midwives

Another woman who provided a focus for female networks within the community was the midwife. Towards the beginning of the final phase of persecution in Eichstätt two midwives, Barbara Khager of Pietenfeld and Barbara Haubner of Adelschlag, were arrested and executed as witches. I do not want to reopen the debate about the vulnerability of midwives to accusations of witchcraft from within the community. It has been satisfactorily argued elsewhere that midwives were not a focus for such allegations.[41] In the case of the Eichstätt midwives, they seem to have come to the attention of the witch commissioners in the same way as their neighbours, through an accumulation of denunciations made by other witch-suspects under interrogation. Haubner's list of malevolent acts constitutes a summary of cases to which she was called as a midwife, but which ended in the death of the infant. Three of these deaths occurred in labour; eight other children died in infancy between the ages of three weeks and one year. She also confessed to killing her own son, aged four.[42] Apart from these acts perpetrated in her roles as midwife and mother, Haubner also testified to two failed attempts to cure headlice, eleven attempts to harm livestock, the crippling of Hans Hermann, the unsuccessful poisoning of 'fishwater',

[41] Cf. David Harley, "Historians as Demonologists: The Myth of the Midwife-Witch", *Social History of Medicine*, 3 (1990), pp. 1–26.

[42] StAN, Hexenakten 48 (B. Haubner), 3 February 1618 (p.m.).

and the murder of Georg Gutmann's wife.[43] Not all of these acts of harmful magic could be confirmed by the witch commissioners. Six of the infant deaths to which Haubner had confessed were rejected by the commissioners because the witnesses contradicted her testimony.[44] The details of the remaining four were confirmed by the alleged victims, as were the crippling of both Hans Hermann and a horse belonging to a former farmer of Weißenkirch who now lived at Pietenfeld, and the pains and loss of hair suffered by the Ochsen Barbel of Adelschlag after she had taken Haubner's remedy for lice.[45] For the two acts of witchcraft against horses in her husband's care, two more against her own livestock, and the murder of Gutmann's wife, Haubner herself was the witness. It seems that no witnesses could be found for the other seven acts.

Of the malevolence described by Haubner which the commissioners thought they had been able to verify, none of the witnesses alleged either witchcraft as the cause or the enmity of the midwife as the motive for the misfortune they or their children had suffered. They merely confirmed the details of Haubner's testimony: Siz's son Georg had died aged one year; Wirt Hensel's wife had miscarried; the Schmidin of Eichstätt's daughter was a breach birth and suffocated in labour; Groß Liendel's daughter did die, but at three weeks rather than six;[46] Hans Hermann had become crippled as had the farmer's horse; and Ochsen Barbel's hair did fall out.[47] Even the last victim's elaboration that she suffered 'great pains' in her head, was not directly ascribed to the ill will of the midwife, although she might have wanted to hint that the harm was inflicted deliberately. In the six unsubstantiated cases of infant murder, the witnesses did not take the opportunity to recast the deaths of their children and blame witchcraft. Indeed, in three of the four cases where the discrepancy between the suspect's and the witnesses' testimonies was noted, there is only a minor difference in the two stories. Two of Bastel Hans's children had died, but neither at six weeks; the Maÿerin had not needed a midwife when her lad died; and whilst the tavernkeeper of Adelschlag's daughter had died

[43] Ibid., 3 February 1618 (p.m.) and 5 February 1618 (p.m.).
[44] The conclusions drawn from the witnesses' depositions (which have not survived in this case) were recorded in the margins of the interrogation transcript, ibid., 3 February 1618 (p.m.).
[45] Ibid., 5 February 1618 (p.m.).
[46] Ibid., 3 February 1618 (p.m.).
[47] Ibid., 5 February 1618 (p.m.).

at three weeks, she did so of smallpox.[48] In the fourth of these cases, Haubner's daughter stated that she had never given birth to a daughter of her own and, by implication, no one could have murdered it at age six months.[49] It is not easy to explain the inconsistency here. Why would a midwife who demonstrates a good knowledge of the fates of her neighbours' children have forgotten that her daughter had never had one? She may, perhaps, have been confused, or her daughter may have lied to the witch commissioners to help her mother: Haubner could not be executed for crimes she had not committed. Together, however, the witness statements confirm that Haubner did not seem to have had a reputation for witchcraft or malevolence. Despite the failures which every midwife must have experienced regularly (and the interrogators' questioning restricted Haubner to a sample of failures rather than successes), women continued to seek Haubner's skills in labour and childcare over a period of years.[50] Alongside these particular skills, Haubner had seemingly developed a sideline in the riddance of headlice. As a midwife, therefore, she was able to cultivate a position as a central figure in the wider network of married women, regardless of age and perhaps class, in this locality. She shared their moments of happiness and grief, and maybe also their secrets.

Unlike many of her contemporaries, Haubner was explicit about the children's corpses which she had exhumed for diabolical purposes, in her case to make weather-magic. The experiences of her profession gave her a larger number of infant deaths than ordinary mothers on which she might have drawn to make her testimony more substantial and appear more credible. From among these she selected two corpses which had been buried in the cemetery for innocent children. They had been born to the Dürschin and the Schmidin, both of Adelschlag and therefore her neighbours.[51] Another witch-suspect, Anna Widman of Berching, confessed to attending the exhumation of four children's corpses conducted by a pair of deceased midwives.[52] She had earlier claimed that these midwives had brought unbaptized corpses to the

[48] Ibid., 3 February 1618 (p.m.).
[49] Ibid., 3 February 1618 (p.m.).
[50] The murder of her four-year-old occurred seventeen years and the deaths in childbed ranged between six months and three years before Haubner's arrest, ibid., 3 February 1618 (p.m.).
[51] Ibid., 5 February 1618 (p.m.). Haubner had already confessed to killing these children in the previous session of interrogation, ibid., 3 February 1618 (p.m.).
[52] StAN, Hexenakten 48 (A. Widman), 28 July 1618 (a.m.).

nocturnal gatherings of the witches.[53] Again, it was the midwives in this narrative who could identify where such corpses might be found. It was they and not any man (including the gravedigger) or other woman who were perceived to have an intimate knowledge of the geography of the cemetery and its secrets. As it was connected to the processes and rituals of birth, one might argue that this specialized female knowledge helped to maintain a link between mothers and their offspring after death.

Conclusion

Female neighbourhood networks were, therefore, structured around women's domestic concerns within the household and the need for expert advice and skill in matters of health, pregnancy, childbirth and childcare. In this respect they transcended to some degree class divisions within the community. Women of the political craft elites sought some health advice from others lower down the social scale. Respected midwives, on the other hand, tended to pregnant women and mothers below them in status. These cross-class links do not seem to have evolved into bonds of friendship. When discussing eating and drinking, female witch-suspects, like their husbands, populated their narratives with friends from households of similar political and occupational status. There is no suggestion in any of the extant narratives, however, that the transactions between healers and patients exposed the former to accusations of witchcraft when the cure went wrong, even to the extent of producing extreme and uncomfortable physical symptoms (the loss of hair and onset of severe headaches, for example). In this respect, Willem de Blécourt's caution that detailed work still has to be done on cunning folk and similar practitioners, especially in relation to witchcraft, needs to be reiterated.[54] The various and disparate individuals who make up this group performed different social roles. Not all of them were able to identify witchcraft, unwitch the bewitched or bewitch the innocent.

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[53] The infants had 'not come to baptism', ibid., 27 July 1618 (a.m.).

[54] Willem de Blécourt, "Witch Doctors, Soothsayers and Priests: On Cunning Folk in European Historiography and Tradition", *Social History*, 19 (1994), pp. 285–303 (pp. 286–8). Recent collections edited by Blécourt and Owen Davies have gone some way to addressing this gap, although most of the articles focus on the period from c.1700 to the present: Owen Davies and Willem de Blécourt (eds.), *Beyond the Witch Trials: Witchcraft and Magic in Enlightenment Europe* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004), and Willem de Blécourt and Owen Davies (eds.), *Witchcraft Continued: Popular Magic in Modern Europe* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004).

Many may have been more like Anna Harding than Magdalena Pößl and were not connected by their clients and neighbours with any part of the witchcraft experience. In a society where persistent personal misfortune was commonplace, everyone must have understood the risks of failure when resorting to unreliable forms of medicine. In that sense the wider female community seems to have been relatively strong and was not wrecked by accusation and counter-accusation as the witch persecution in Eichstätt progressed. Certainly, as I have already stressed, few accusations of witchcraft originated from within the communities of the principality and no witness statement substantially confirms the malevolence behind any experience of misfortune.

Men seem to have been excluded from participating in the areas of concern upon which these networks of women were founded. That is not to say that they were ignorant of the illnesses which afflicted their kin and neighbours in other households. Men simply had different spheres of primary responsibility which placed them in networks of men who shared their particular concerns. It was not gender, therefore, but the efficient running of the household within a patriarchal society which determined the separation of spheres between men and women. Gender-based networks were complementary rather than divisive. Indeed, fathers also promoted associations between their daughters and important female figures within the community by the naming of godmothers. The secretary to the *Hofrat* during the witch persecutions of 1617–31, Paul Gabler, for example, chose Susanna, abbess of the cloister in Mariastein, as godmother to three of his daughters. This choice was perhaps courteous. Of more immediate importance to Gabler, who was a relative outsider to the Eichstätt polity, was the fact that Susanna was represented at the baptism by Regina Thiermayr, a relation of the vice-chancellor.[55] In their turn, two men of lesser status, a cook named Andreas Weber and a tanner named Balthasar Mayer, chose Paul and Anna Maria Gabler as godparents to their children.[56]

Over the course of these last three chapters on food, sex and health, I have attempted to show that the confession narratives constructed

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[55] Buchner, "Eichstätter Familienbuch", p. 127. At his appointment as secretary to the *Hofrat* in September 1608, Gabler was described as coming from Berching, Hochstift Eichstätt Literalien 47, "Hofgesinde- und Beamtenbuch unter Bischöfen Moritz (1539ff.), Eberhard (1553), Martin (1561), Kaspar (1590), Johann Konrad (1595). 1539–1612 (1666)", f. 164r.

[56] Buchner, "Eichstätter Familienbuch", pp. 343 and 404.

by the witch-suspects reveal a complex series of intimate relationships which bound the citizens of Eichstätt together. The picture which emerges from these narratives complements that which I found when looking at the suspects' direct assessments of their relationships with their denouncers, victims and the witnesses to their alleged harm in chapter 3. It is a much more positive one than that which other historians have found for other regions in which intense witch persecution occurred. In this respect I would argue that the conflict which seems to inhere in the witches' confessions was primarily a product of the process of diabolization. It was not a reflection of the actual quality of the defendants' daily relations with their neighbours. The standard questions put by the witch commissioners to all suspects forced them to attempt to make sense of the heresy of witchcraft and the witches' alleged encounters with the Devil, nocturnal gatherings, exhumations of children's corpses, weather-magic, and entries into cellars, bedchambers and stalls, as well as their acts of malevolence. Where they could, the suspects naturally grounded their confessions in reality. When discussing nocturnal gatherings they described ordinary, if fictionalized, celebratory events. When they considered seduction, they told of episodes of real or imaginable sexual intercourse. When they described their harmful acts they diabolized acts of healing. In these confessions the diabolical receded from the foreground and became a superficial element of the testimony, there because it was required by the interrogators. In the following chapter, I will turn my attention to the investigation of the treatment of the witch-suspect Maria Mayr, wife of the court scribe. The evidence which emerges from the testimony of the town hall staff provides an alternative view of gender relations to the one which I have so far presented. Class, family and gender ties united many of the Eichstätt witch-suspects, allowing an image of strong social cohesion to filter through the witches' confession narratives. In the experience of custody, however, these natural ties and the hierarchies which they reinforced were undermined.

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE ABUSE OF AUTHORITY

In the preceding four chapters, I have argued that the witch-suspects' comments about their denouncers and their descriptions of sabbaths, diabolical seductions and malevolent witchcraft suggest strongly that they maintained good relationships with their neighbours and that both the town of Eichstätt and the villages in its immediate vicinity were characterized by the neighbourliness of established and well-integrated communities. As I have also shown, this general picture of social harmony did not preclude the occurrence of significant episodes of social or personal conflict. There was, however, one context, the jail, in which gender and class conflict were institutionalized during the Eichstätt witch persecutions. In this chapter I will discuss the investigation into the treatment of one witch-suspect, Maria Mayr, by her warders; it began in November 1618. Very early in this investigation, the witch commissioners also uncovered the systematic physical abuse of other female prisoners and servants who worked in the town hall.

On the face of it these abuses would seem to have been facilitated by a highly rigid patriarchal structure in which the female prisoner was isolated from the protection of her kin and female gossips and lay at the mercy of her warders, especially the bedwatchers assigned to look after the prisoners at night. The later interrogation of the prison-watcher Matthes Prenner who was accused of maltreating the suspect Anna Erb in 1626 testifies to the persistence of this abuse.[1] The warders did not treat their male charges in the same way. Yet, the conditions of Mayr's custody, although grim, seem to have been more favourable than those of other prisoners and witch-suspects in early modern jails. She may have been treated better than other prisoners because she was well-connected through both her own family and that of her husband to men who dominated the secular structures of authority in the town of Eichstätt, and because her kin maintained good relations with the staff of the town hall. Whilst their gender certainly made women in

[1] StAN, Hexenakten 43 (M. Prenner). This investigation is dated 14 March 1626.

the male-dominated world of the town hall easier targets for abuse, it seems the warders were mindful of other contingencies in their attitude toward each individual in their charge. The female prisoner's vulnerability to abuse lay in a combination of gender, class and the degree to which she had been marginalized in the community, if at all, *before* her arrest.

The investigation

Maria Mayr was born into the urban elite of Eichstätt in about 1591.[2] Her father, Thoma Nagelmayr, was a member of the *Hofrat*, witnessed the marriages of his council colleagues and served as godparent to their children.[3] When she was about seventeen Maria married Georg Mayr, a member of an extensive family of senior councillors who dominated local secular politics throughout the early modern period. Georg's cousins and in-laws related him to the other powerful Eichstätt families of Bonschab, Mosner, Mittner, Rehel and Richel.[4] Whether they liked or even loved each other, Maria and Georg would have known each other well through their family connections and the social and cultural life of the town. The newly-wed Mayrs established their household in the Vordere Marktgasse;[5] and in the first year of their marriage they had their only son, Hans Georg, who was ten when his mother was arrested in 1618.[6] From their front door they could have looked down their short street into the market square where Maria or her maid would have done some of their shopping and their gossiping, and across that to the town hall where Georg worked as the court scribe.

The town hall was the central building of secular political life in the town. It was in the town hall that some council business and all

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[2] Mayr was twenty-seven at the time of her arrest, StAN, Hexenakten 48 (M. Mayr), 23 June 1618 (p.m.).

[3] Nagelmayr was witness, for example, to Martin Höning's second marriage to Anna Heim. In 1615, his own wife Maria was chosen as godmother to the sixth child by Höning's third wife and future witch Barbara, Buchner, "Eichstätter Familienbuch", p. 167.

[4] These relationships are very complex, but can be reconstructed from ibid., pp. 72–5, 222–6, 237–41, 268–9, and 272 (among others).

[5] This would have made them near neighbours of Hans Baur (Hochenschildt's 'good neighbour') who also lived in this street, StAN, Hexenakten 48 (B. Ruoser), 29 December 1617 (p.m.).

[6] StAN, Hexenakten 48 (M. Mayr), 23 June 1618 (p.m.).

the local administration was attended to, although the most important issues involving the *Hofrat* and the prince-bishop would have been discussed at Willibaldsburg, the bishop's residence. Petty criminals from the administrative district of Eichstätt and perpetrators of capital crime from much of the rest of the principality were detained and interrogated in the town hall;[7] and from here the councillors advised their local administrators distributed around the prince-bishopric about the conduct of criminal interrogations.[8] Everyone would have known what type of people were incarcerated in this building and no doubt their crimes would have dominated gossip at the market which stood both in the shadow of the town hall and on the journey made by inhabitants of the Western Quarter to and from the cathedral and other churches situated in the centre of the town. No doubt too that the prisoners in custody would have heard some of this talk through the walls of their quarters as well as the other familiar sounds of municipal life from which they had been taken, and through which many of them would have to pass on their way to their punishment. Of particular relevance in the case of the investigation into the treatment of Maria Mayr, it was in the town hall that Georg would have worked alongside councillors, the witch commissioners and their staff, the executioner, and the *Oberamtsknecht*, his wife and their staff, including the prison watchers. Apart from his familial relationships with some of these people, Georg would have known most of them well on a professional basis, and Maria probably either also knew them before her marriage or came to know them through her husband.

When Maria was arrested between ten and eleven o'clock on the evening of the 21 June 1618, therefore, she knew intimately the route to her place of imprisonment and the individuals whose tasks it would be to look after her in custody, interrogate and torture her and, if she were to confess, condemn and execute her.[9] About her interrogation, however, we know very little. It was certainly a protracted one. The transcript of her interrogation is incomplete and consists of two fragments. The first of these fragments covers a period of almost five months

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[7] Hans Drünckhlein, for example, was sent from the district of Arberg to be tried for nine counts of theft, DiöAE, "Urfehdebuch", ff. 60v–62v.

[8] Such instructions form the bulk of the material in StAN, Hochstift Eichstätt Literalien 59, "Kopialbuch, die unter Bischof Martin und seinen Nachfolgen erlassenen Generalbefehle und Ausschreibungen enthaltend. 1457–1626".

[9] StAN, Hexenakten 48 (M. Mayr), 21 June 1618 (p.m.).

from the date of her arrest to 16 November 1618, much longer than the average period of custody for a suspect in this last phase of witch persecution.[10] During this time, Mayr endured two sets of confrontations with her fellow witch-suspects and repeated torture;[11] she had also been ignored by the witch commissioners for two months from 17 August.[12] Despite these torments, Mayr had consistently maintained her innocence, perhaps aware from her husband's knowledge of the law that this stance should have secured her freedom.

The second fragment continues from 20 November 1618 and leaves off on 10 December.[13] This section of Mayr's interrogation was concerned primarily with her treatment in custody, but throughout she was asked constantly whether she was a witch to which question she always replied that she was not.[14] Between December 1618 and spring 1619, however, Mayr had succumbed to the witch commissioners' persistent interrogations and confessed to forty acts of malevolent witchcraft. Both the document listing the extracted details of her harmful activities and the record of the witnesses' statements survive;[15] the latter is dated 2 May 1619.[16] Of the twenty-two witnesses called to testify, none specifically named either Mayr as a witch or witchcraft as the cause of the misfortune they described. We do not know to what else Maria Mayr confessed after December 1618. Nor is it possible to state what happened to her. Her name does not appear in the "Urfehdebuch", although this does not mean that she was not executed as the later

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[10] Ibid., 21 June 1618 (p.m.) to 16 November 1618 (p.m.).

[11] Ibid., 23 June 1618 (p.m.), when she was confronted with Margretha Geiger, Anna Harding, Valtin Lanng and Hans Wagner, and 17 August 1618 (p.m.), when she was confronted with the Eichstätt Anna Widman (the Bilerin). Torture was consistently threatened or applied in most sessions of the interrogation.

[12] The first period of the trial was conducted under the direction of vom Stein and Freisinger (named in ibid., 21 June 1618 (p.m.)) and written up by the witch commissioners' scribe Balthasar Rinck. When the interrogation was resumed on 16 November 1618, the interrogators were given as the town judge and Dr Leÿthin. The hand was that of Rinck's colleague Lorenz Breinlein, ibid., 16 November 1618 (p.m.).

[13] StAN, Hexenakten 48 (M. Mayr—investigation), 20 November 1618 to 10 December 1618 (p.m.).

[14] Thus in the final extant transcript of her interrogation, Breinlein recorded that Mayr 'says she was no witch, it goes with her as God wants, and although several testified against her and died for it that they had seen her at the dances, she could not however say that she was at other dances than at weddings once in her life', ibid., 10 December 1618 (p.m.).

[15] StAN, Hexenakten 48 (M. Mayr—*malefacta*) and (M. Mayr—*inquisition*).

[16] StAN, Hexenakten 48 (M. Mayr—*inquisition*), f. 6v.

case of Margretha Bittelmayr, the wife of the town scribe, shows.[17] Neither of the witch-suspects who were released, however, had begun to make a confession, and the list of forty malevolent crimes was probably extracted over many sessions of interrogation during which Mayr would have had to have repeated that she was indeed a witch. It seems probable therefore that she was executed.

If it is not possible to state much about Mayr's experiences under interrogation, the Eichstätt witch-trial documentation does reveal a lot about her experiences, and those of her fellow suspects, in custody. The investigation into Mayr's treatment in the town hall was prefaced by her report on the afternoon of 20 November 1618 that one of the watchers, the Schneider, went into the quarters of Kunigunda Pronner who had since been executed. This event happened during the night, but Mayr did not know for what reason. She 'nevertheless thought that it was not proper for the watcher to go at night to the imprisoned women'.[18] The telling of this episode allowed her to fulfil a promise made to Kunigunda that when she was called in to the commissioners she should report to them that they did an injustice to her, Kunigunda, that 'the doctor tortured her so hard that she had to confess that which she had not committed'.[19] During her next session of interrogation on the morning of 23 November, Mayr claimed to have gotten pregnant.[20] In conjunction with the earlier allusion to the Schneider's irregular relations with Pronner in the town hall, this claim seems to have precipitated the subsequent investigation into malpractice by the prison warders.

Mayr's claim to pregnancy would, on the face of it, seem to have been a clever strategy. If she was pregnant she would have been spared torture for the remainder of her interrogation, and the execution would have been postponed in the event of a conviction until the birth of the child. A stay of execution might also have ended in a pardon or an acquittal. In order to retain the image of innocence she had thus far successfully projected, however, she had to convince her interrogators that she had become pregnant by her husband; in order for the strategy to work, she

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[17] Although neither case was recorded in the "Urfehdebuch", only Bittelmayr's omission was noted by Buchta, "Die Urgichten im Urfehdebuch des Stadtgerichts Eichstätt", p. 246. The *Hexensonderkommando* did, however, create a file for Mayr, BundesA ASt Frankfurt, FSg.2/1-F 13 669 Eichstätt L-Z, frame 24 (M. Mayr).

[18] StAN, Hexenakten 48 (M. Mayr—investigation), 20 November 1618.

[19] Ibid., 20 November 1618.

[20] Ibid., 23 November 1618 (a.m.).

had really to be pregnant when she made the claim. Maria Mayr clearly believed that she was pregnant, and I do not think we should doubt her statement that she had taken this precaution either against further harsh treatment in the torture chamber or, as the interrogators were later to suggest to her, in an attempt to get them to 'spare her on account of forgiveness for her supposed pregnancy'.[21] Her announcement does not seem to have been spontaneous, but calculated to fit a narrative which could be corroborated by other witnesses if the interrogators were to investigate the claim. She had made it without any apparent prompting immediately after responding to the standard opening questions of any session of interrogation for witchcraft with the characteristic statement that she was no witch and had never renounced God.[22] It was then that Mayr stated that she was pregnant. Naturally the commissioners wanted to know by whom as the only men she should have had any unsupervised access to were the prison watchers, and they may have had in mind the suggestion of sexual activity between the Schneider and Kunigunda made in Mayr's previous session of interrogation two days before.[23] Mayr answered that her husband, Georg, had got her pregnant. Asked when and where Georg had been with her, Mayr answered twelve weeks ago in the prison. With the knowledge of the wife of the former *Oberamtsknecht*, Barbel Halm, he brought her wine and two birds; the commissioners, she was careful to add, should ask her brother-in-law Mathes Mayr about it because he knew of this too.[24] Mathes was a member of the *Hofrat* and his status should, in normal circumstances, have given extra weight to any witness deposition he might make. The key to understanding her motive and the timing of the announcement lies in the twelve week interval between coitus and revelation of the pregnancy. This period gave Maria Mayr time in which to confirm to herself, probably through the cessation of the menstrual cycle, that she was expecting a child (even if quickening, generally held to occur at sixteen weeks, had not been felt). In her own mind therefore she was probably certain that she was pregnant and perhaps that a midwife or other competent person would be able to confirm this when the interrogators decided to investigate her claim.

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[21] Ibid., 23 November 1618 (p.m.).
[22] Ibid., 23 November 1618 (a.m.).
[23] As I discussed in the last chapter, Pronner seems once to have supported herself through sexual activity as a prostitute or mistress, and the interrogators may have had these episodes in mind here.
[24] StAN, Hexenakten 48 (M. Mayr—investigation), 23 November 1618 (a.m.).

The morning session of interrogation on 23 November then continued with questions about the details of the alleged visit by Georg Mayr: it occurred after the annual market when Barbel Halm fetched him at about seven in the evening.[25] When Maria returned to the interrogation chamber for the afternoon session, however, she was faced with a physical inspection on the command of the *Landvogt*, Georg's former employer, who sat in on some of the sessions of the investigation into Maria's treatment in custody, in order to confirm the pregnancy.[26] This inspection was undertaken by Walburga, the wife of the new *Oberamtsknecht*. Walburga was unable to discover any indication that Mayr was pregnant.[27] That is not to say that Maria had not been expecting. Walburga may have had her own motives for failing to find physical evidence of the pregnancy, or she may have been too inexperienced or incompetent to identify less than obvious signs of conception. Mayr may also have miscarried because of the poor and stressful conditions in which she found herself. The issue of the pregnancy, however, then receded as the interrogators began to investigate the probable corruption, if not diabolical inspiration, that underlay Mayr's claim.

Immediately after Walburga confirmed that there was no sign that Mayr was pregnant, the interrogators accused the suspect of lying about it.[28] This time she said that they should ask her watcher Hans about it.[29] Later during this session, Mayr was asked 'which devil had told her to submit that she was pregnant'. She replied, 'none but her husband'.[30] The fact of the pregnancy was not brought up again until the very end of the next session of interrogation on the afternoon of 24 November. This had been the most intense session encountered by Mayr thus far during her custody and the interrogators concerned themselves with her relations with her keepers and her sexual continence. The witch commissioners concluded by asking if she was pregnant; Mayr answered that she 'did not know it for certain, but she was doubtful of it' before again stating that she was 'no witch'.[31] Mayr was then

[25] Ibid., 23 November 1618 (a.m.).
[26] Ibid., 23 November 1618 (p.m.). The *Landvogt* was the bishop's representative and therefore one of the most senior secular officials in the principality. He also sat on a later session of this investigation, ibid., [no date] December 1618 (p.m.). The next session was dated 10 December 1618.
[27] Ibid., 23 November 1618 (p.m.).
[28] Ibid., 23 November 1618 (p.m.).
[29] Ibid., 23 November 1618 (p.m.).
[30] Ibid., 23 November 1618 (p.m.).
[31] Ibid., 24 November 1618 (p.m.).

brought before the witch commissioners on Wednesday 28 November, in the afternoon, for a short session of questioning about what items had been sent to her whilst she had been in custody. At the end of her testimony on that day Mayr was asked if she still thought she was pregnant: she 'does not know, she has an illness'.[32] During the final two sessions of interrogation for which the transcripts exist, the pregnancy is not mentioned at all.[33]

At a procedural level, the dismissal of Mayr's claim to be pregnant was an easy, if diverting and time-consuming, obstacle to overcome, but the interrogators were then able to turn the unsubstantiated claim to their advantage. Throughout her interrogation, some five months from her arrest to the inspection by the *Oberamtsknecht*'s wife, Mayr had maintained that she was innocent of witchcraft and that she was pious. Walburga's confirmation that Mayr showed no indication of pregnancy put the suspect in a weak position. The interrogators were able to suggest that she was in the first place a liar, that she had known that she was not pregnant. They then attempted to link Mayr's testimony to her character as a suspected witch by asking her about the Devil's role in her story, but dropped these lines of interrogation in order to pursue the possibility that she was a 'whore'.[34] Assuming that she had planned to get pregnant, Mayr would have needed to have had sex with a man. Mayr could claim that she had had sex with her husband, but she had to convince the interrogators that their servants, the town hall staff, had permitted illicit conjugal visits and had not had sex with her themselves. By getting Mayr to confess that she had indeed had sex with a warder, the interrogators would have undermined her strategy of projecting an image of herself as innocent, both of the crime of witchcraft and spiritually. They could then demonstrate that her narrative had, to this point, been a fabrication. They could not, however, dismiss the claim that her husband had gone up to her in custody if she persisted in it. They had to investigate it further to see if it was true, and if it was they then had to address the abuse of office committed by some or all of the town hall staff who had allowed this, and perhaps other, visits to happen. If Georg Mayr had had sex with Maria in the town hall then he would have had to rely on pre-existing

[32] Ibid., 28 November 1618 (p.m.).
[33] Ibid., [no date] December 1618 (p.m.) and 10 December 1618 (p.m.).
[34] Ibid., 24 November 1618 (p.m.).

relationships with and perhaps bribery of some or all of the warders in order to secure a visit. These lines of investigation—into Mayr's sexual conduct, the reality of Georg's visit and the warders' abuses of their positions—were pursued simultaneously and became entwined. The various relationships which emerge from the testimonies given by those who are known to have been interrogated about these issues are best examined by looking at the three main strands of the investigation discretely, beginning with Georg's visit.

Georg Mayr's visit

There were several potential witnesses to the visit paid by Georg Mayr to his wife Maria apart from the couple themselves. In her testimony of the morning of 23 November, Maria herself stated that Barbel Halm had allowed Georg to bring her wine and poultry; Mathes Mayr, Georg's brother knew of this. Towards the end of the same session of interrogation, she further stated that Barbel had fetched Georg at seven in the evening, and that her bedwatcher, Hans, had known of that. The one other person who ought to have known what was going on, although he need not have taken part in the arrangements of the visit, was Jacob Halm, then the *Oberamtsknecht*, husband of Barbel and Hans' supervisor. Of these individuals the most pertinent witness, Georg Mayr, and the most reliable because of his status, Mathes Mayr, were at the time of this inquiry visiting Burghausen and they do not seem to have been called to testify by the witch commissioners.[35]

Unfortunately, we cannot know if it was coincidence that the investigation began when the Mayr brothers were out of town. The commissioners may have chosen to interrogate Maria when she was unable to call on the protection of her husband and his male kin; or the men may have left Eichstätt when they heard that the inquiry was to take place (or had already begun) in order to distance themselves from the testimony that Maria and her jailers were bound to give. Whatever the reasons for their absence, Georg seems to have been in contact with individuals (the confessor to the witch-suspects, Father Michael, and the wife of one of the witch commissioners' scribes) associated with Maria's case throughout her interrogation and may have been informed

[35] Ibid., 23 November 1618 (p.m.).

by them that the witch commissioners were about to postpone the trial and investigate the circumstances surrounding the alleged pregnancy.[36] He would also have heard through his family or friends that the remaining three witnesses to his meeting with Maria had been sacked from their jobs, detained and interrogations begun. The bedwatcher Hans was first questioned on the afternoon of 23 November, during which session he was confronted with Maria Mayr, and for a fifth time on the morning of 5 December;[37] the interrogation of Barbel Halm began on 26 November, in the morning, and continued on the morning of 28 November and sometime during 5 December;[38] Jacob Halm was interviewed on 27 November (in the morning), 5 December and 11 December (in the afternoon).[39]

In their testimonies, deposited independently of each other, Barbel and Hans agreed that they had conspired together to allow Georg into the town hall to see his wife.[40] They both also implied that neither Jacob nor the other warders knew of their actions. When asked, Hans stated that his assistant, the eighty-year-old Anderle, had not been present when he had taken Georg to the upper chambers where Maria was incarcerated.[41] Barbel twice testified that her husband Jacob had not been there either.[42] Anderle was not asked about the visit during his first five sessions of questioning;[43] whether the episode was raised during the remainder of his interrogation cannot be determined because the transcript is incomplete. The first question put to Jacob, on the other hand, was whether he knew of Georg and Maria's meeting. He confirmed that Mayr had told him that her husband had visited her when he had been at the *Kirchweih* (the annual celebration of the con-

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[36] Mayr was the source for the information that the scribe's wife and Father Michael were supplying information to her husband about her conditions in custody and her suffering under torture, ibid., 23 November 1618 (a.m. and p.m.).

[37] StAN, Hexenakten 48 (Hans), 23 November 1618 (p.m.) and 5 December 1618 (a.m.).

[38] StAN, Hexenakten 48 (B. Halm), 26 November 1618 (a.m.), 28 November 1618 (a.m.), and 5 December 1618.

[39] StAN, Hexenakten 48 (J. Halm), 27 November 1618 (a.m.), 5 December 1618, and 11 December 1618 (p.m.).

[40] StAN, Hexenakten 48 (Hans), 23 November 1618 (p.m.) and 24 November 1618 (a.m.), and (B. Halm), 26 November 1618 (a.m.).

[41] StAN, Hexenakten 48 (Hans), 24 November 1618 (a.m.).

[42] StAN, Hexenakten 48 (B. Halm), 26 November 1618 (a.m.) and 28 November 1618 (a.m.).

[43] StAN, Hexenakten 48 (Anderle), 27 November 1618 (p.m.) to 4 December 1618 (p.m.).

secration of a church) in Pollenfeld. Jacob added that Mayr had also reported to him, on the same occasion, that she had gotten pregnant. When he had asked who it was that had made her pregnant, Maria had given the enigmatic answer, 'he who made one made the other'.[44] Presumably she was referring here to her son Hans Georg. She told Jacob further that his wife and Hans had let Georg up to her. Jacob then proceeded to elaborate on the background to the meeting between the Mayrs. When he had gone to Pollenfeld, he had entrusted his key to Barbel, but he had not thought that she would abuse this trust. He did add, however, that Barbel had taken stockings up to Mayr without his permission and once, when he had been drunk with wine, his wife and Hans had allowed the wife of the butcher Raffeli up into Mayr's quarters. The Raffelin and Maria had drunk about a measure of wine together. When he found out about this, Jacob had beaten both Barbel and Hans.[45] Jacob seems to have been telling of the beating here to demonstrate his control of the town hall staff and, perhaps, to imply that his wife was not trustworthy, which would contradict his previous suggestion that he had, at least until his journey to Pollenfeld, thought that he could rely on her as a deputy.

Jacob's testimony also reveals that Maria had once pleaded with him to allow Georg to be brought up to her.[46] Possibly it was Maria therefore who had initiated the negotiations with Hans and Barbel in order to secure the clandestine meeting with her husband. She had, by her own admission, also asked Jacob to allow her brother to see her;[47] and Hans testified that Mayr had begged him to help her get out of custody, although in Mayr's narrative it was Hans who had offered to aid her.[48] Other individuals too were said to have pestered the town hall staff for permission to see Maria. Barbel claimed that she had allowed the Raffelin to visit Mayr only after she had been persuaded to do so when the butcher's wife came to see her in her kitchen in order to settle the meat account (which could not be done because Jacob was not in the town hall).[49] Both Barbel and Jacob also testified that Anna Wunder

[44] StAN, Hexenakten 48 (J. Halm), 27 November 1618 (p.m.).
[45] Ibid., 27 November 1618 (p.m.).
[46] Ibid., 27 November 1618 (p.m.).
[47] StAN, Hexenakten 48 (M. Mayr—investigation), 24 November 1618 (p.m.).
[48] StAN, Hexenakten 48 (Hans), 24 November 1618 (a.m.), and (M. Mayr—investigation), [no date] December 1618 (p.m.).
[49] StAN, Hexenakten 48 (B. Halm), 26 November 1618 (a.m.).

had sought permission to visit Mayr, but they had both refused.[50] It could be therefore that it had been Georg who had arranged the visit with his former colleagues in the town hall.

In addition to confirming that Georg had indeed visited his wife, the testimonies of Maria, Barbel and Hans also reveal that Barbel had received a thaler from Georg for her help and that Hans had been promised an 'honorarium', which Mayr had testified had been fifteen Kreuzer and Barbel thought was considerably more at a thaler, but which had not been paid—Mayr confessed that she had forgotten about it.[51] Other details of the visit are less clear. Georg had certainly arrived in the evening, but the witnesses did not agree about the date or how long he had stayed. Mayr stated that the meeting had taken place after the annual market;[52] Barbel implied that it had occurred a fortnight before this occasion.[53] Whether the *Kirchweih* in Pollenfeld, the date of the visit implied by Jacob in his testimony, had occurred before or after the Eichstätt market, I have not been able to determine.[54] The witch commissioners, it should be noted, did not concern themselves with this discrepancy. Whenever this visit actually took place, Mayr thought that Barbel had fetched Georg, but she did not state how long he had stayed.[55] From the testimony elicited from Barbel and Hans, however, it seems that Georg had arrived by himself, that Barbel had let him in, and that Hans had escorted him up to Maria's quarters, through a back way and without lights in order to avoid other staff resident in the town hall.[56] During the first session of his interrogation on 23 November, Hans also testified that Georg had stayed for two or three hours.[57] Barbel was to testify three days later, on 26 November, that he had remained with his wife for a similar length of time, about three hours.[58] In between, however, at the very beginning of the second

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[50] StAN, Hexenakten 48 (J. Halm), 27 November 1618 (p.m.), and (B. Halm), 28 November 1618 (a.m.).

[51] StAN, Hexenakten 48 (M. Mayr—investigation), 23 November 1618 (a.m.), (Hans), 24 November 1618 (a.m.), and (B. Halm), 26 November 1618 (a.m.). Hans also received a drink of the wine brought by Georg Mayr.

[52] StAN, Hexenakten 48 (M. Mayr—investigation), 23 November 1618 (a.m.).

[53] StAN, Hexenakten 48 (B. Halm), 26 November 1618 (a.m.).

[54] StAN, Hexenakten 48 (J. Halm), 27 November 1618 (p.m.).

[55] StAN, Hexenakten 48 (M. Mayr—investigation), 23 November 1618 (a.m.).

[56] StAN, Hexenakten 48 (Hans), 24 November 1618 (a.m.), and (B. Halm), 26 November 1618 (a.m.).

[57] StAN, Hexenakten 48 (Hans), 23 November 1618 (p.m.).

[58] StAN, Hexenakten 48 (B. Halm), 26 November 1618 (a.m.). Although earlier in

session of interrogation on the morning of 24 November, Hans contradicted himself by stating that Georg had stayed with Maria until four or five the next morning, which would mean that the visit may have lasted up to ten hours.[59] Again, the witch commissioners do not seem to have been troubled by these slight differences in the testimony.

Despite these minor discrepancies, the suspect's and witnesses' statements seem to be sufficiently consistent for one to conclude that the alleged meeting between Georg and Maria did actually take place. Unfortunately, without Georg's explanation of his participation in this episode one only has Maria's word that the aim of the meeting was for her to get pregnant. Hans did not comment on the purpose of the clandestine visit and Barbel claimed that she did not know what had happened between Georg and Maria.[60] Hans did, however, add an interesting observation to his testimony at the end of his last session under interrogation on 28 November which may allude to his knowledge of Maria's intentions for the meeting. The witch commissioners concluded their questioning of Maria's bedwatcher by asking him directly if he thought that Mayr was pregnant. This was the only time the subject of the pregnancy was discussed explicitly in Hans' sessions of the inquiry. He did not give a direct answer, preferring to observe that Maria was no longer able to keep food down since Georg's visit.[61] Hans may have been describing Maria's condition as it had developed over the previous twelve weeks or he may have been recycling his knowledge of an illness which she had been suffering from at the beginning of August 1618, about a month before the Mayrs' meeting. As she was being taken to bed at about nine in the evening of 1 August 'she fell under her bench and lay there as if she was already dead'; the *Amtsknecht* (probably Jacob Halm), suspecting illness, had fetched the witch commissioners.[62] The cause of this illness was not stated, but excessive pain during the interrogation does not seem to have been directly to blame. Maria had not been interrogated on that day, nor, in fact, since 27 July, and the last time she had been tortured was on 19 July.[63] During the night of

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this session of interrogation she had said that Georg had met his wife at six o'clock in the evening and that Hans had led Georg out in the morning which might imply that he had stayed longer than three hours.

[59] StAN, Hexenakten 48 (Hans), 24 November 1618 (a.m.).
[60] StAN, Hexenakten 48 (B. Halm), 26 November 1618 (a.m.).
[61] StAN, Hexenakten 48 (Hans), 28 November 1618 (a.m.).
[62] StAN, Hexenakten 48 (M. Mayr), 2 August 1618 (a.m.).
[63] Ibid., 19 July 1618 (a.m.) and 27 July 1618 (p.m.).

5 August, the interrogators were again called to visit Maria, presumably because she was ill, although this is not stated in the record.[64] Whether or not Hans was conflating this episode with the meeting between the Mayrs, the context supplied by the question put to Hans (pregnancy) and the inclusion of Georg's visit at this point suggest strongly that his answer was a reference to morning sickness or similar condition rather than the unspecified illness which Maria was to suggest that she was suffering from later on the same day.[65]

This story of a conspiracy to enable Georg and Maria to meet illicitly reveals the quality of relationships between two very different married couples. The sources for the history of early modern marriage consist of court records and prescriptive literature complemented by pictorial representations and personal writings (diaries, letters and autobiographies). Although the contents of these latter often reveal the warmth and affection which the married state could support and nurture, they do not alter radically the impression given by the more numerous judicial cases and writings of theologians, jurists and other commentators that marriage reflected the values of a patriarchal society in which the wife was subordinated, often by force rather than voluntarily, to her husband and later, in widowhood, to her male children or other relatives. Despite moral strictures designed to delimit the lawful power of the husband and the duties of the wife, abuse of male authority within marriage seems to have been tolerated until it disrupted the household in its functions as an economic or political unit. Female resistance to such practices as brutal physical punishment was generally regarded as seditious and a wife who resorted to this course could expect punishment rather than relief for her situation.[66] The problem with this depiction of marriage is that it is not possible to estimate the proportion of marriages which were characterized by this seemingly endemic tension. The extent to which early modern patriarchal norms and court cases reflect the realities of daily life in the conjugal unit is difficult to determine: the former were largely articulated in the artificial context

[64] Ibid., 6 August 1618 (a.m.).

[65] StAN, Hexenakten 48 (M. Mayr—investigation), 28 November 1618 (p.m.).

[66] This was the case with, for example, Marguerite Vallée who had killed her husband after years of systematic physical abuse. She sought remission of her punishment with the help of neighbours. In the letter, the latter (with whom Vallée had sought sanctuary) continued to distance themselves from the breakdown of the household by urging Vallée to return to her husband for the sake of her children. Her letter of remission is reprinted in Davis, *Fiction in the Archives*, pp. 131–4.

of treatises written by men who had a substantial economic and political interest in promoting the values of patriarchy;[67] the latter emerged when marital friction could no longer be addressed and the partners reconciled within the household or wider kinship, guild or neighbourhood networks. Whether wives regarded themselves as disenfranchised in the conjugal unit rather than recognising the contemporary practical benefits of such an institution for themselves, their husbands and their children is, I think, also a matter for debate. As the Eichstätt witchcraft cases show, everyday life was generally circumscribed not by normative values, but by bonds such as neighbourhood and friendship which could, but did not always, cut across the artificial gender and class divisions within the local community and the household.

These bonds do not seem to have done so, however, in the household of Jacob and Barbel Halm. Their relationship seems to have been characterized by duplicity and distrust, drunkenness and violence. It was the very deceitfulness of Barbel's dealings that allowed her to undermine her husband's authority and help facilitate the Mayrs' meeting. Barbel and Jacob both testified that she had not informed him of Georg's visit, either before or after it had happened, and indeed she and Hans may have conspired to wait until Jacob had gone to the *Kirchweih* in Pollenfeld before they acted. Whilst Barbel appeared to be candid about her actions without attributing any motive or moral significance to them, Jacob presented the whole episode, particularly the misuse of the keys left in her care when Barbel stood in as his deputy, as a breach of his trust in her.[68] This was not the only occasion on which Barbel seems to have abused her position as wife of the *Oberamtsknecht* in order to aid Mayr, and Jacob's retelling of his wife's misdemeanours suggests that he may have had reason to doubt her fidelity to his office and authority even before he had become aware that she had committed such a serious misdeed.

Jacob had only recently discovered, he claimed, that Barbel had once taken the suspect a pair of stockings.[69] This was hardly a significant

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[67] Examples of English prescriptive literature on marriage can be found in Joan Larsen Klein (ed.), *Daughters, Wives and Widows: Writings by Men about Women and Marriage in England, 1500–1640* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1992). These should be read in conjunction with informal writings on marriage by women, such as those collected in Patricia Crawford and Laura Gowing (eds.), *Women's Worlds in Seventeenth-Century England: A Sourcebook* (London: Routledge, 2000), pp. 163–86.

[68] StAN, Hexenakten 48 (J. Halm), 27 November 1618 (p.m.).

[69] Ibid., 27 November 1618 (p.m.).

infringement of the duties to which Barbel seems to have been bound by her marriage to Jacob as *Oberamtsknecht*, but it did serve to promote the image that Jacob was trying to give of her as duplicitous and untrustworthy. This representation of Barbel was further reinforced by the story that she and Hans had also allowed the Raffelin up to visit Mayr without notifying her husband or any of the other warders. When he had found out about this unauthorized meeting, Jacob had beaten both wife and watcher, a punishment he was able to impose as the patriarchal head of his household and the senior *Amtsknecht*. He may also have incorporated the beating into his narrative to enhance his credentials as a diligent servant of the local authorities and to distance himself from the actions of Barbel and Hans. What is clear from Jacob's testimony, however, is his apparent unwillingness to stand by Barbel as her husband or to take responsibility for her actions as her supervisor. He did not, for example, try to mitigate any prospective punishment by testifying to her general good behaviour and her qualities as his spouse and deputy. Instead, he resorted to a denigration of Barbel's character as a means to protect his own position. It is not clear if Jacob's and Barbel's testimonies reflected the real state of their marriage or if they were concocted to pass blame on to Barbel in order to limit the punishment which they perhaps expected to receive if they had both been party to the conspiracy. In either case a contemporary image of disharmony within marriage, of the 'woman on top' (see Ill. 4), and the limits of patriarchal power emerge from their narratives.

Jacob's admission that he had been drunk when the Raffelin's visit had occurred was not investigated further by the interrogators either, although its place in the story suggests that it may not have been unusual for Jacob to be in that state.[70] He reported it as fact rather than as an excuse for unwittingly providing the occasion for Barbel to allow the Raffelin up to see Maria. In his narrative, and also in his wife's testimony, Barbel as the disobedient wife and employee was to blame for this transgression of his authority; had she been a good wife, Jacob seems to have been saying, she would not have taken advantage of his inability to supervise her. This may give us an indication of the quality of the Halms' marriage if Jacob was regularly drunk, especially when considered in conjunction with the beating he admitted giving Barbel. Neither drunkenness nor violence, for example, characterize the

[70] Ibid., 27 November 1618 (p.m.).

Ill. 4. 'Aristotle and Phyllis', section from Peter Flötner, 'The Power of Womanhood', early sixteenth century, woodcut. Kunstsammlungen der Veste Coburg [Geisberg Nr. 818, Inv. No. XV/1, 168–171]. Reproduced with kind permission.

marriages of any of the other couples whose names and relationships were mentioned by suspects and witnesses during the course of the witch persecutions in Eichstätt. One should note, however, that drunkenness has been interpreted as an accepted element of masculinity in the early modern period, at least in a secular cultural context, and we should not, I think, be surprised that Jacob placed the blame for his poor stewardship of the jail on to his wife.[71]

In contrast, Barbel did not mention Jacob's drunken state in her version of this story, but did claim to have taken the opportunity of Jacob's absence from the town hall to let the Raffelin visit Mayr.[72] The witch commissioners seem to have been more interested in this absence and in Halm's visit to Pollenfeld than in his self-confessed drunkenness. They questioned him specifically about how regularly he was present in the town hall when they interrogated him on 5 December. He testified then that he was not always able to remain at home because of the work he had to do for the *Rentmeister* and the town judge; in fact, he did not often have time to eat soup because of his duties.[73] Jacob was attempting here to impress upon his interrogators that his absences were legitimate, although a holiday in Pollenfeld was unlikely to have been among his duties as *Oberamtsknecht*. The implication which the interrogators may actually have drawn from this short piece of testimony was that Jacob had frequently left his keys with his wife, thus facilitating other abuses of her office of which he was not aware.

The quality of the marital relationship between Georg and Maria Mayr is not represented in the witnesses' testimonies as unambiguously as that between Jacob and Barbel. What is clear, however, is that where Jacob was attempting to distance himself from his wife's unprofessional actions, Georg did not disown Maria after her arrest for witchcraft. The Mayrs actively tried to maintain contact with each other, at least until the investigation into the prison warders' treatment of the women in custody had begun, despite the physical obstacles and Jacob's reluctance which stood in their way. Jacob reported that Georg had once asked him to pass his greetings on to Maria.[74] This means of contact seems to have been permitted as Jacob was to testify too that Maria and

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[71] On drunkenness as an acceptable part of male culture, see, for example, Roper, "Blood and Codpieces", pp. 111–13.

[72] StAN, Hexenakten 48 (B. Halm), 26 November 1618 (a.m.).

[73] StAN, Hexenakten 48 (J. Halm), 5 December 1618.

[74] Ibid., 27 November 1618 (p.m.).

her brother had also exchanged greetings through his good offices.[75] That Georg took the trouble to contact Maria shows that he had not abandoned his wife, even though there was only a slight chance that she would eventually be acquitted and released. In addition, however, Georg was also, according to Maria's testimony, receiving information about her welfare from the commissioners' scribe's wife and Father Michael, both of whom were in a position to report to him in detail about Maria's interrogation and her spiritual or psychological state. If it was routine practice to update the family of a suspect's interrogation and custody, it would not have been necessary for the interrogators to ask Maria twice about how Georg knew about her conditions in jail.[76] The secrecy inherent in the processes of the interrogation, for example the elimination of significant details of the confession from the public records of each case of witchcraft, indicates that it was unlikely that information on a suspect was available even to close relatives. It seems therefore that Georg had instigated the submission of reports on Maria's welfare from his former colleagues in the town hall, or that they knew that he would like to hear about her, perhaps because Maria herself had persuaded them to inform him about the progress of her interrogation. In either case Georg was being kept abreast of events in the town hall.

That Georg was sending greetings to his wife and was probably kept informed about her condition and testimony indicates that he wanted to stand by her. The clandestine visit confirms his attitude. Whatever payments Barbel and Hans received, the meeting was fraught with possible dangers for those who decided to involve themselves in it. Indeed, when the visit finally came to light it cost the jobs not only Jacob, Barbel and Hans, but of several, if not all, of the other town hall employees. Unfortunately, it has not been possible to trace their subsequent careers, but they do not seem to have been re-employed by the council; nor can one state yet what happened to Georg Mayr after this investigation was completed. There existed, however, further potential harm in the meeting. Whilst Barbel and Hans had to be constantly in the company of the witch-suspects in the course of their work, Georg was choosing to consort with one when he had no professional need to do so. If she

[75] Ibid., 27 November 1618 (p.m.). Maria had already stated that Halm had done this, returning with two apples for her, StAN, Hexenakten 48 (M. Mayr—investigation), 24 November 1618 (p.m.).

[76] Ibid., 23 November 1618 (a.m. and p.m.).

were to confess to witchcraft at any point this illicit contact with Maria could have counted as an *indicium* against him and eventually contribute to his arrest. On a spiritual level, Georg was also imperilling his soul by placing himself in danger of being seduced into the witch sect. Even if he avoided the worst possible judicial and spiritual effects of visiting Maria, he was at risk of being harmed by the witch by touching her or of compromising his honour by seeking her presence.

Despite these serious consequences which might follow the visit to Maria, Georg decided to go ahead with it. His actions were not, I think, motivated by self-interest, a desire, for example, to maintain honour or status by ensuring that his wife was not executed for witchcraft. As early as Maria's arrest in June 1618, not yet a year into the third phase of persecution in Eichstätt, it would have become clear to local observers that the witch sect had penetrated deep into the families of the citizens of the principality. Of the ten residents of Eichstätt who had been executed on or before 30 June 1618, one was the wife of a weaponsmith, two were wives of bakers, another was married to a ropemaker, and a fifth to the carter at the episcopal court.[77] Two male witches may have been a brewer and a carter respectively.[78] Most of these witches, therefore, were married to men, or were men, whose crafts were to some extent exclusive and well remunerated, and gave them access to the local councils. Georg would not have stood alone among professionals and craftsmen as a deceived spouse and could, if he had believed that Maria was a witch, have walked away from the situation, disowning his wife without jeopardising his honour. He had no need to act desperately to prevent his own name from being besmirched by conspiring to get Maria out of jail.

The whole episode makes more sense if one assumes that Georg was certain of his wife's innocence of the crime of witchcraft (confirmed by the reports of Maria's persistent denials of witchcraft which he had been receiving from the wife of the witch commissioners' scribe and Father Michael). He no doubt knew, as a former court official, that whilst this tactic should have resulted in his wife's acquittal, the Eichstätt interrogators accepted the full consequences of the status of witchcraft as a *crimen exceptum* and applied excessive tortures on dubious grounds

[77] These were Barbara Ruoser, Kunigunda Bonschab, Anna Beck, Judith Obermayr and Margretha Geiger, all of whom I have discussed previously.

[78] That is Paulus Danner and Hans Wagner whom I have also discussed before.

to secure confessions which, in other circumstances, would not have been allowed. So far his wife had been able to maintain her innocence, but it could only be a matter of time before the witch commissioners tired of her resistance and sought more extreme methods to make her confess. Georg must have known that pregnancy was the only certain way of preventing the commissioners from resorting to harsher forms of torment; and if he could buy her more time in which to persist in her claims to innocence, she would have had a greater chance of being acquitted, at least if the normal juridical processes were adhered to. Whatever the reasons for Georg's absence from the town as Maria was about to inform the commissioners about her condition, his presence in Eichstätt at the moment of her revelation would probably not have served the Mayrs' purpose; the fewer individuals who were forced to testify to the clandestine meeting the more coherent the story would remain and the easier it would be for those absent from the town (and protected to a degree by their connections within it) to be portrayed as the primary instigators and supporters of the strategy to get Maria out.

Despite Georg's absence at a critical moment in the interrogation of Maria Mayr, however, his meeting with her gives one an indication of the quality of their relationship. If the Halms' marriage was characterized by deceit and violence, Georg was motivated to aid Maria because he cared for her, even if one cannot say that he loved her. His was an emotional and dangerous response to her predicament which was not sanctioned, either morally or legally, by a prevailing patriarchal ideology or the views about suspected witches that historians of the persecutions commonly impute to early modern society.[79] The actions of Georg and Maria Mayr show that their marriage was more the product of interaction between individuals than a dull rehearsal of the prescriptions of the patriarchal ideology which was supposed to dominate the early modern political and economic structure of the household. What Maria actually thought of Georg, unfortunately, we do not know, but, as one might expect in her circumstances, her actions demonstrate that she preferred life with him to further custody, death at the stake or life on the run as an outlaw.

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[79] A corresponding case would seem to be that of Rebekkah Lemp and her husband Peter, Christopher R. Friedrichs, *Urban Society in an Age of War: Nördlingen, 1580–1720* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1979), pp. 206–14.

If the story of Georg's illicit meeting with his imprisoned wife illustrates the extremes of conjugal relations in early modern Europe, from the abusive to the caring, it also tells us something of the attitudes of the town hall staff towards their positions and their charges. Every male employee in the town hall had to take an oath to perform their duties honourably and legally before God and the representatives of the *Hofrat*. The conditions of the oath were extended implicitly to their wives. And yet in this story all the participants acted dishonourably and illegally. Barbel and Hans acted as gatekeepers between Maria Mayr and the outside world, permitting visits by her friend, the Raffelin, as well as her husband, but denying them to others like Anna Wunder. In the case of the conspiracy to facilitate Georg's visit, the pair also proved themselves to be corruptible, taking bribes rather than acting out of any evident friendship with either of the Mayrs. It may be that the Raffelin's successful attempt to 'persuade' Barbel to let her see the suspect likewise turned on a bribe, and that Wunder failed to offer any or a sufficient inducement to her. In Anna Harding's confession one finds other Eichstätt residents seeking access to suspects, and presumably they too had to bribe Barbel Halm, Hans or the other prison watchers. In this case, as I have already noted, Harding was explicit about the reasons why Barbara Rabel, Eva Susanna Moringer and the cook Anna Maria came to see her. Two were clients who wanted to persuade her not to inform the commissioners of their dealings with her as a healer, and they did so by offering her material comforts; Anna Maria probably wanted to be certain that Harding would neither name her as an accomplice (they were known to go about together) nor tell of her activities as a prostitute. The Raffelin may have had similar motives for visiting Mayr. When asked what the pair had talked about, Halm replied that the Raffelin had asked whom Mayr had named as her accomplices.[80] Whether Wunder also sought such information from a visit to the suspect, one cannot know. Even if Wunder and the Raffelin hoped to dissaude Mayr from naming them, it remains probable that they also sought to comfort her. The Raffelin, for example, had visited Mayr more than once to share a drink with her which would suggest that she did not merely want to bribe her against naming her as an accomplice.[81]

[80] StAN, Hexenakten 48 (B. Halm), 26 November 1618 (a.m.).
[81] Ibid. 26 November 1618 (a.m.).

The witch commissioners and councillors may have expected the regular town hall staff and the prison watchers to have bent the rules in this way for their own financial gain. The breaches of office perpetrated by the confessor and the scribe's wife were of a different order because they were reporting confidential information which might jeopardize the spiritual and legal processes. The status of witchcraft as an exceptional crime meant that the spiritual confessions made to priests by the witch-suspects were acceptable forms of evidence. Thus at the end of her first session of interrogation on the morning of 15 October 1626, Margretha Bittelmayr was asked 'Whether she still knew what she had confessed two years ago to the commissioner, and asked innocently for advice?'.[82] To find explicit references to priests passing information to the families of suspects is an altogether different situation and raises questions which cannot, perhaps, be answered. Was Father Michael generally sceptical of the existence of a witch sect in Eichstätt, as his colleague, Friedrich Spee, was later to become? Or was he simply acting out of compassion, and, if so, just to Maria Mayr or to all those witch-suspects who came into the town hall? The same questions may be asked of the wife of the commissioners' scribe. Did she believe that the wife of her husband's former colleague was really a witch? Or did she act out of friendship or some neighbourly or professional obligation to Georg Mayr? Father Michael and the scribe's wife had important information which they could impart to Maria's husband. The confessor could inform him about her spiritual condition, without necessarily going into the details of any confession she had made, and reassure him about her innocence, at least as she had maintained it to him. The scribe's wife, assuming her husband discussed his work with her, might have been able to relay information about the events in the interrogation chamber, what questions had been asked, what torture applied, what marks found, what answers given, and so on.[83] All of this privileged knowledge, to which Barbel and Hans should not have had access, could have been significant in Georg's decision to risk a meeting with his wife.

Even if one cannot know why Barbel Halm, the prison watchers, the confessor or the scribe's wife chose to help the Mayrs, bribes

[82] StAN, Hexenakten 45 (M. Bittelmayr), 15 October 1626 (a.m.).

[83] Indeed, Mayr introduced the fact that her husband knew everything that went on under torture. Asked who told him, she said the commissioners' scribe's wife had gone to him, StAN, Hexenakten 48 (M. Mayr—investigation), 23 November 1618 (a.m.).

notwithstanding, two points need to be emphasized. First, no one in these stories of conspiracy was afraid of the witch-suspects and the maleficent power which was supposed to manifest itself in their glances, words or touches. That is not to say, of course, that those who attempted to visit the suspects did not fear what they might say about them personally under interrogation, as the Raffelin and the three women who gained access to Anna Harding certainly were. Second, almost all of the relationships which were exposed during the investigation into the treatment of Maria Mayr in custody existed prior to her arrest. The only one which may have been new was that between Father Michael and Maria. Otherwise, Georg Mayr had worked with all of those named in the execution of the meeting before he left his post as the court scribe for the *Landvogt*, and Maria Mayr as his wife and as one who had been born and grew up in Eichstätt surely knew them too. The success in maintaining the secrecy of the Mayrs' meeting (and one must remember that it was only revealed to the commissioners about twelve weeks after it had happened at the point when Maria chose to say that she had become pregnant) was dependent on the trust which these long-term relationships engendered: trust that the bribes promised would be paid (Hans' 'honorarium' had not at the time Maria made her announcement, but he had not decided that it was not forthcoming); trust that the conspirators would aid the couple on the appointed evening; and trust that they would maintain their silence after the event (which they did). The Mayrs also had to trust Father Michael and the scribe's wife to supply the information which had been requested of them and to do so accurately without letting on to the witch commissioners.

Maria Mayr's infidelity

Despite the trust placed in him by Georg Mayr, Hans may have had a greater role in Maria's alleged pregnancy than merely being one of the conspirators who had arranged the illicit meeting. Maria may have taken a further precaution to get herself pregnant than a single encounter with her husband by having sex with her bedwatcher. Georg was, after all, an unreliable choice of progenitor when the desperate circumstances in which Maria found herself required a high degree of certainty in her endeavour. In ten years of marriage, she had only conceived once, and then almost immediately after the wedding. She had, by her own testimony of the previous June, never suffered a late-

term miscarriage or a still-birth, although she had sought the services of Anna Harding to procure an abortion before her marriage to Georg.[84] When both Hans and Maria testified to sexual relations with each other, however, neither party explained their actions explicitly as an attempt to get Maria pregnant.[85] Towards the end of his second session under interrogation (on the morning of 24 November), Hans stated that Maria had begged him to help her out of prison. He then 'finally confessed' that he had had sex with her four or five times before restating Maria's pleas to him. This sexual activity, Hans confessed, had gone on for about three weeks and ended eight days ago.[86] On 26 November, Hans testified that he had promised to help Mayr out, and she had begun to take care of his desires two days after his proposal to aid her. He had forbidden her to report this.[87] Until Hans confessed to having sex with her, Maria had not broken this injunction.

Maria was also questioned on 24 November about her relations with Hans. Hans, she testified, had wanted to help her and 'promised to do so if she took care of his desires'.[88] She refused at first, but because Hans persisted, she had 'performed his will three or four times'.[89] Later, some time between 1 and 9 December, Maria repeated her testimony, but altered it slightly by stating that Hans had had sex with her 'four or five times, not more'.[90] She added at this time, however, that these relations had begun immediately after her husband had been with her, before reiterating that Hans had promised to help her out. Mayr's sexual relations with Hans may therefore have been directly related to the initial attempt to become pregnant twelve weeks before the investigation began. The references by both Hans and Maria to his agreement to help her out probably referred to the strategy of getting Maria pregnant, although Hans may not have cast himself in the

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[84] The witch-suspects seem always to have listed miscarriages and still-births alongside the children who were born alive. Thus, Wappel Weber listed five children by her first husband, of whom three were still alive, one had died in infancy aged eight days, and the fifth she had miscarried and was not baptized, StAN, Hexenakten 48 (W. Weber), 12 December 1617.

[85] It is not clear from the surviving records how the interrogators came to know, or guess, that Maria had had sex with her bedwatcher.

[86] StAN, Hexenakten 48 (Hans), 24 November 1618 (a.m.).

[87] Ibid., 26 November 1618 (p.m.).

[88] StAN, Hexenakten 48 (M. Mayr—investigation), 24 November 1618 (p.m.).

[89] Ibid., 24 November 1618 (p.m.). The scribe added in the margin that she 'had had to do with him' nine or eight times.

[90] Ibid., [no date] December 1618 (p.m.).

role of fathering a child. He may simply have meant that he would facilitate the meeting between Georg and Maria. Neither of them can have meant an agreement to aid Maria's escape from jail. This latter strategy would not have helped Maria's cause, especially as she had successfully presented herself up to this point as innocent of the crime of witchcraft. An escape attempt would have counted as a further legal *indicium* that she was indeed a witch and, if successful, it would have made Mayr an outlaw with little hope of returning to her husband, kin and community. A successful pregnancy, ostensibly caused by her husband, would have been of more use to Maria. Hans' involvement would have been easy to conceal. He would have received payment in pleasure (the sex which would possibly have continued until Mayr's fate was determined) and cash (the money promised, but not yet paid, for his part in arranging the meeting between Maria and Georg). His silence would have been further guaranteed by the threat posed to his livelihood should his employers hear of his intimate and indecent relations with a witch-suspect. Georg, on the other hand, could remain in ignorance of Maria's infidelity and be left to assume that he was indeed the father of the infant she had expected to conceive. Because the sex always took place at night, the *Oberamtsknecht* and his wife (who both seem to have fulfilled their duties during the day), the other warders and the other witch-suspects then in the town hall need not have seen or heard anything suspicious as long as Maria and Hans were careful.

Any interpretation of the confessions of sex by both Maria and Hans is heavily reliant on the truth of their narratives, Maria's testimony about when intercourse between the two began, and the context provided by the questions asked by the witch commissioners. I do think, however, that Maria and Hans did have sex together. In neither case did they have to admit to sexual relations, nor was great psychological or physical pressure brought to bear on either individual before they testified to a sexual relationship. One must remember too that Maria had withstood many months of intense pressure during the conventional processes of witch interrogation. It seems out of character, therefore, for her to have jeopardized her defence with an unforced and irrelevant lie. The corroborative nature of the elements of the two confession narratives is also striking. Even if they had the motive to do so, Hans and Maria did not have much opportunity to construct a story together after the investigation into the pregnancy had begun. Hans was the first of the watchers called to give evidence in the investigation and would not

have known from his former colleagues what questions were going to be put to him, although he might have had an idea that it concerned the clandestine visit between Maria and Georg. It was at the end of his second session under interrogation, on 24 November, that he confessed to having sex with Maria.[91] The witch commissioners then immediately adjourned for lunch, after which they resumed their interrogation of Mayr, concentrating on her relations with the town hall staff. Although Hans and Maria had maintained contact with each other since Hans' dismissal, it is unlikely that they would have sought to construct a story about illicit sex which was detrimental to their respective cases; and as it is unlikely that they would have had contact with each other during the lunch interval on 24 November, they could not have conferred about their testimonies then. Maria's testimony, however, confirmed Hans' on the key points: she had consented to sex with Hans in exchange for his help; and they had had sex about four times.

The narratives produced by Hans and Maria in response to the interrogators' questions contain a further point of concurrence. Prior to asking each of them about their sexual relations, the witch commissioners asked both of them the same seemingly innocuous question: had they drunk together? Hans stated that he had twice fetched brandy from which he gave Mayr a drink; he did not think it would do much harm.[92] Mayr reported that she had 'once or twice' had a brandy with Hans, Anderle and another person whose name cannot now be read.[93] Whoever the third person was, the presence of Anderle here should not surprise us because he was Hans' assistant. During the same sessions of interrogation, Hans was asked whether he had ever taken the fetters from Mayr's feet, meaning without the consent of the witch commissioners or the *Oberamtsknecht* (he had not).[94] Maria was asked what she thought of Hans being removed from duty. She thought nothing of this, but he continued to bring her a beer occasionally, just as Anderle sometimes brought one for Maria Lang.[95] These questions were related to those about sex. The witch commissioners were trying to establish an adulterous relationship between Mayr and her bedwatcher by suggesting that their relations were sealed by drinking together, the granting of

[91] StAN, Hexenakten 48 (Hans), 24 November 1618 (a.m.).
[92] Ibid., 24 November 1618 (a.m.).
[93] StAN, Hexenakten 48 (M. Mayr—investigation), 24 November 1618 (p.m.).
[94] StAN, Hexenakten 48 (Hans), 24 November 1618 (a.m.).
[95] StAN, Hexenakten 48 (M. Mayr—investigation), 24 November 1618 (p.m.).

special privileges, and the development of an emotional attachment. The effect of reconstructing Mayr as an adulterer would have been to shift the focus of the investigation from her attempts to get out of jail by means of the alleged pregnancy to her character as a suspected witch. It was not difficult to equate Maria the adulterer with Maria the whore. Indeed, this appears to have been the witch commissioners' intention. Before the section of the interrogation in which Mayr was asked about what she thought of Hans' dismissal and about her sexual relationship with him, the scribe recorded that 'she is earnestly spoken to, to tell the truth, one knows well that she is a whore. She says she knows nothing other than what she did with her husband which was no whoremongery'.[96]

The interrogators concluded the questioning on the afternoon of 24 November by asking Maria about her relations with the *Oberamtsknecht*, Jacob Halm. This may have formed part of the attempt by the commissioners to reconstruct Maria as a whore by suggesting that she had had sex with more than one man in the town hall. Maria only testified, however, that Jacob twice brought her greetings from her brother, but said that he could not let him up. Jacob did return the greetings and came back with two apples, presumably a gift from the brother.[97] Jacob later brought Maria two measures of wine which she said she finished in Hans' presence. On this occasion Jacob told her that she would soon be released after which he grabbed her nose.[98] When he was later called before the interrogators, Jacob confirmed the substance of much of this part Maria's testimony, omitting the assault on her face.[99]

The warders' abuses

The grabbing of Maria's nose is a gesture reminiscent of the victims' assaults on the faces of their slanderers in sixteenth-century Nuremberg described by Valentin Groebner.[100] Indeed, it carried a similar coded

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[96] Ibid., 24 November 1618 (p.m.).
[97] Ibid., 24 November 1618 (p.m.).
[98] Ibid., 24 November 1618 (p.m.).
[99] StAN, Hexenakten 48 (J. Halm), 27 November 1618 (p.m.). Halm's answers seem to have been given in response to questions originating in Mayr's evidence. He was careful to note that he comforted Mayr and the other prisoners and told them to be of good heart because God would soon help them out.
[100] Groebner, "Losing Face, Saving Face".

message about the dishonour of the owner of the face and suggested in Mayr's case that she was a whore as well as a witch. Jacob's action was, however, also designed, like the false statement about her impending release which preceded it, to torment Maria by emphasising her predicament and its likely outcome for her. This is a rare example of the minor verbal and physical abuse one might assume was perpetrated by custodians of prisoners of all sorts in this period, but without further recorded instances one cannot determine how frequent they were. That the prison warders shared drinks with their charges, in both Hans' and his assistant's cases even after they had been dismissed from their posts, suggests that this teasing may have coexisted with a more sympathetic attitude on the part of the keepers to those in their custody. This form of abuse was, however, less prevalent in the transcripts of the investigation into the treatment of the Eichstätt witch-suspects than the sexual abuse of female prisoners. This emphasis was the result of the interrogators' questions which began to centre increasingly on this subject because it had emerged as a regular occurrence in custodial life.

To a degree, Maria Mayr's sexual relations with her bedwatcher were consensual. In Mayr's narrative, Hans did not attempt to rape her, but rather to persuade her into having sexual intercourse with him. The desire to get pregnant may have overcome the initial reluctance of this apparently innocent and pious wife to do his will. She may also have felt that she had no option but to give in to Hans' requests. Having sex with Hans may have been one way of ameliorating the conditions of her lengthy custody; she may have been 'whoremongering' for her own comfort (food, drink, greetings from her family, gifts from her neighbours, or time out of her shackles). In this context, sex with the warders may have been a way of buying into the system of loans and credit by which prisoners in the town hall could secure provisions from those looking after them.[101] It appears that these loans were repaid both in cash and through the division of clothing and other possessions used by the executed witch when she had been in custody. The questions put to Jacob Halm on this point suggest that the taking of such possessions,

[101] Old Anderle lent money to Maria Lang, StAN, Hexenakten 48 (Anderle), 27 November 1618 (p.m.). Hans once bought Mayr some fish, StAN, Hexenakten 48 (M. Mayr—investigation), 28 November 1618 (a.m.). Even outsiders seem to have participated in this loans system. The money for Barbel's bribe was given to the Mayrs by the treasurer to the *Hofrat*, ibid., 23 November 1618 (a.m.), and Jacob thought that Dr Freisinger (the witch commissioner) had lent Maria Mayr about fourteen thalers, StAN, Hexenakten 48 (J. Halm), 11 December 1618 (p.m.).

tainted as they were by contact with the dishonourable and malevolent witch, was not encouraged by the witch commissioners.[102] Occasionally too the town hall staff shared their own food and, more often, drink with their charges and it was this practice which the interrogators had tried to place in the context of developing intimate relations between Maria and Hans.[103] In agreeing to sex with Hans, Mayr may also have sought protection from the other warders. Hans had, she said, rescued her from the Schneider.[104]

However wealthy the witch-suspect, however willing her family to support her materially in custody, she had few resources of immediate value to trade for provisions apart from her body. The prison warders seem to have taken advantage of this vulnerability, even of the older suspects like Kunigunda Pronner who was about sixty years old, to satisfy their sexual desires. It is not difficult to see why the interrogators quickly turned their attention from the conspiracy to facilitate Georg Mayr's meeting with his wife to an extensive examination of the warders' sexual misdemeanours with the witch-suspects and a maid who seems to have served in the town hall. The attempt to eradicate the witch sect was part of a wider programme of reform in Eichstätt. The witch commissioners could not, therefore, employ men whose collective conduct undermined their wider objectives; they were no longer dealing with one or two corrupt individuals, but the entire town hall staff. When the interrogators asked Hans on 26 November how often the other watchers went to the women, they had already heard the stories of Maria's relationship with Hans and the Schneider's visits to Pronner. To this question, Hans first repeated the testimony that he had once found the Schneider lying in bed with Kunigunda, adding that Bartle had asked the following morning what the Schneider had been doing up with her for so long.[105] Later during this session, he reported that Anderle was constantly with the maid of the town hall.[106] In both cases he stated that he did not know whether they had done any wrong, meaning whether

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[102] In his responses, Jacob accused Hans of stealing a cushion from the Eichstätt Anna Widman, and he described the division of cloth, clothing and money left by Kunigunda Pronner, ibid., 27 November 1618 (p.m.).

[103] Apart from the gifts and drinking already described, the wife of the witch commissioner's scribe, for example, brought food to several suspects held in custody, StAN, Hexenakten 48 (B. Halm), 28 November 1618 (a.m.).

[104] StAN, Hexenakten 48 (M. Mayr—investigation), 24 November 1618 (p.m.).

[105] StAN, Hexenakten 48 (Hans), 26 November 1618 (p.m.).

[106] Ibid., 26 November 1618 (p.m.).

they had had sex. Anderle was interrogated about his relations with the witch-suspects and the maid on the afternoon of the next day, 27 November: he had lent Maria Lang eight Kreuzer and some beer; he had only spoken with the girl.[107] Bartle was interrogated during the same afternoon. He testified that the Schneider did sometimes go up to Kunigunda's quarters, but he did not know whether he did anything wrong on these occasions. He was not aware that he had asked the Schneider about these visits, but once the Schneider had got drunk in the lower room and as he went up to Kunigunda again, Bartle had jokingly said to him that he would report this to the commissioners; 'the Schneider asked him with raised hands to say nothing of it'.[108] Apart from this episode, his daughter had once brought him eight Kreuzer and Barbel twelve Kreuzer on account of Barbara Hirsch for whom he sometimes left some beer.[109] Then he added that he had not reported what the Eichstätt Anna Widman had asked him because 'he thought nothing lay on it'—it is not clear to what the commissioners and Bartle were referring here.[110]

Bartle was not interrogated further, but Anderle was brought before the commissioners again three days later. In the morning he testified that after Father Michael had left the town hall, he sometimes took hold of the maid, 'but he never put his member in her as she did not want to get pregnant'.[111] They did, however, masturbate and sometimes rubbed their genitals together, but he ejaculated only once when she was masturbating him.[112] Anderle added that he never knew the girl carnally 'because she was too small'.[113] In the afternoon session, Anderle repeated this assertion that he had never had sex with the girl because she was 'much too young and her pudenda much too narrow'.[114] He would, however, have been allowed, he claimed, had she been older. He was then confronted with the girl who confirmed Anderle's testimony, reporting that she had masturbated him about six times. He had often 'raised her dress and wanted to put his virile member in her';[115] once

[107] StAN, Hexenakten 48 (Anderle), 27 November 1618 (p.m.).
[108] StAN, Hexenakten 48 (Bartle), 27 November 1618 (p.m.).
[109] Ibid., 27 November 1618 (p.m.).
[110] Ibid., 27 November 1618 (p.m.).
[111] StAN, Hexenakten 48 (Anderle), 29 November 1618 (a.m.).
[112] Ibid., 29 November 1618 (a.m.).
[113] Ibid., 29 November 1618 (a.m.).
[114] Ibid., 29 November 1618 (p.m.).
[115] Ibid., 29 November 1618 (p.m.).

she lay on the bed and he tried to persuade her to have intercourse, but he abandoned the attempt because she went upstairs. Later, under torture, Anderle stated that the girl had masturbated him eight times rather than six.[116] The interrogators then wanted to know what he done with the Wäscher Barbel's maid. It is not clear how the interrogators came to hear of the alleged sexual improprieties between Anderle and this servant; narratives about this relationship did not originate in earlier extant testimonies. Anderle stated, however, that he had never behaved improperly towards Wäscher Barbel's maid.[117] He was interrogated again on 4 December. This time he reported that the Wäscher Barbel had once lain with 'ein bettel man' (a beggar or mendicant friar) in the confession room. He then confessed to having sex with her himself once because 'she wanted to be pregnant'.[118] After this occasion they had attempted to have sex three times. On the first of these she asked him to stop because she was afraid that the 'bettel man' might hear; the second time he had been drunk on light wine and, presumably impotent, did nothing with her; and the third time they began to have sex but he was not able to continue.[119] Finally, he observed that the Blattscher, yet another of the jailers, often remained for about two hours with Anna Scheur and also quite long with the younger Anna Mayr, and he stated that this watcher had taught Maria from Rappersdorf what she should say presumably to the witch commissioners.[120]

The other watcher for whose interrogation the transcript survives is Lorenz Fendt. He was questioned on 1, 4 and 5 December. Together, these three sessions of interrogation reveal a catalogue of sexual activity over a period of twenty years. After a confusing account of the Wäscher Barbel's sexual improprieties, he went on to describe how she had masturbated him six or seven times and he had ejaculated. He had also masturbated her seven times during which 'he found her pudenda was wet and moist', suggesting that she was, perhaps, a willing partner.[121] Fendt claimed not to have done anything with her maid.

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[116] Ibid., [no date] December 1618 (p.m.).
[117] Ibid., [no date] December 1618 (p.m.).
[118] Ibid., 4 December 1618 (p.m.).
[119] Ibid., 4 December 1618 (p.m.).
[120] Ibid., 4 December 1618 (p.m.). It is not clear who Maria from Rappersdorf might have been.
[121] StAN, Hexenakten 48 (L. Fendt), 1 December 1618 (p.m.). The wetness and moistness of the vagina had long been regarded as the product of active sexual pleasure, and continued to be so into the eighteenth century when the passive female

He did, however, confess that twenty years ago he had had sex with a maid at Kipfenberg and two years later with a 'common person' (a prostitute) at Treichling. He never did improper things with Maria from Rappersdorf, *except* sometimes giving her a hand on the behind, kissing her about three times and twice grabbing her on the breast; 'but he does not remember that he once lay with her'.[122] Later, he stated that he done no more than grab Wäscher Barbel's maid and Maria from Rappersdorf on the breast or stomach; he had also once grabbed Anna Mayr from Landershofen.[123] Whether this was the younger Anna Mayr with whom the Blattscher spent some time or the older one arrested at about the same time, Fendt did not say. During his widowhood, Fendt had had sex with another 'common person, a whore named Ottel',[124] and he had once had sex with a pregnant maid and murderer, Margaretha Ehmenn from Greding, when she was in custody about twelve years ago (at that time he was married).[125] On another occasion he wanted to have sex with Anna Hambscher and grabbed her on the breast, but he could not perform 'the thing with her' because of a girl lying nearby.[126] He also once went in to the Binder Bantschin and they began to have sex, but the Schneider interrupted them and he left off without achieving anything; this was about fourteen days before her execution for witchcraft.[127] Finally, he added that he had lain with the Wäscher Barbel's maid three times with the intention of having sex with her, 'but this never happened because she would not allow it'.[128] In the middle of this catalogue about his own lechery, Fendt reported that Anderle had been drunk and gone in to Catharina Ströbl, now executed, grabbed her and called her an 'old whore'.[129]

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came to dominate in theories of sex and the body, Thomas Laqueur, *Making Sex: Body and Gender from the Greeks to Freud* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1990), pp. 43–52.

[122] StAN, Hexenakten 48 (L. Fendt), 1 December 1618 (p.m.).

[123] Ibid., 4 December 1618 (p.m.).

[124] Ibid., 4 December 1618 (p.m.).

[125] Ibid., 4 December 1618 (p.m.). Ehmenn had been executed at some time between spring 1603 and September 1606 for the murder of three women, DiöAE, "Urfehdebuch", ff. 45r–v and 47r–v. Fendt's testimony would suggest that she had been imprisoned in 1606.

[126] StAN, Hexenakten 48 (L. Fendt), 5 December 1618 (a.m.).

[127] Ibid., 5 December 1618 (a.m.).

[128] Ibid., 5 December 1618 (a.m.).

[129] Ibid., 1 December 1618 (p.m.).

These are fairly graphic descriptions of sexual activity in the town hall ranging from simple harassment (which was not improper according to Lorenz Fendt) to what might be described as attempted paedophilia and probable rape (the visits to witch-suspects in fetters whilst the warders were drunk). Apart from Maria Mayr, other witch-suspects like Anna Hambscher and the Binder Bantschin may well also have been attempting to get pregnant, in Binder Bantschin's case to forestall the inevitable sentence of death. It is not, however, the range of sexual misconduct which impresses the reader of the transcripts, but the fact that all of the men looking after the prisoners in the town hall, with the exception of Jacob Halm, participated in it, knew what their colleagues were up to and candidly acknowledged their illicit sexual encounters without significant pressure. It might seem, therefore, that the attempt by Westerstetten and his cathedral chapter to impose Tridentine reforms on the population of Eichstätt was not working, and that an older patriarchal ideology which allowed men to fornicate with witch-suspects, prostitutes and the wives of others with little risk of serious judicial punishment was too strongly embedded in local male culture. Westerstetten had, however, only been the episcopal incumbent for six years at the time of the investigation into the treatment of Maria Mayr and the other witch-suspects. This was too short a period of time in which to change the attitudes of men like Lorenz Fendt who had been used to extra-marital sex for some two decades. Indeed, Fendt's testimony indicates that the moral message was getting through to him, even if he had not yet conformed to the basic tenets of chastity in matters of sexual activity.

By the time he told his interrogators about the first of his episodes of adultery, Fendt appears to have been quite agitated. During the first session of interrogation on 1 December, Fendt broke off to state, apparently voluntarily, that 'he was now settled in a new home and hopes to live there honourably', adding that he wanted now to confess.[130] He was anxious at this point to stress that his immoral sexual behaviour was in the past and that he had reformed his behaviour. After completing the part of his confession concerning the Wäscher Barbel and then her maid, Fendt asked the *Landvogt*, who was present throughout these investigations, to pray for him, and he commended himself to

[130] Ibid., 1 December 1618 (p.m.). To this point his confession had been confused and unsatisfactory.

God.[131] His anxiety had perhaps been compounded by the realization that the potential consequences of his actions could include execution. He had, after all, admitted to committing at least one grave sin by this point in the interrogation: sex with a witch, both an untouchable and a seductress. In having sex with her, he had placed himself in the same vulnerable position in which Georg Mayr would have found himself after his meeting with Maria, and exposed himself to temporal and spiritual harm despite the protection perhaps offered by Fendt's special office in relation to witch-suspects. Having commended himself to the *Landvogt* and to God, Fendt evidently decided to make a clean breast of his sexual sins.

Lorenz Fendt's faith in the mercy of the *Landvogt* and God appears not to have been misplaced. Whilst he was threatened with torture during the second session of interrogation—Mathes Hörman the executioner was summoned to appear before Fendt and then ordered to affix thumbscrews to him—it was not carried out;[132] and his absence from the "Urfehdebuch" would suggest that no severe punishment (banishment or death) was imposed upon this witness. The interrogators may have considered that Fendt's long list of sexual misdemeanours had been sufficiently punished by his sacking which we know happened and the damage which this and perhaps gossip about his sins would have caused to his reputation, plus perhaps an unknown lesser sentence. No doubt Fendt was then permitted to return to his trade of weaving.[133]

If Fendt was aware how seriously his sexual past would be taken by the witch commissioners, why did he feel compelled to confess to apparently irrelevant acts of fornication? The questions asked of him were specifically about his abuse of prisoners in custody, referring to the 'improper things' that he had done in the town hall or to named women (the Wäscher Barbel, her maid, and Maria of Rappersdorf). It was in respect of this issue only that Mathes Hörman was called into his presence. It is not possible, however, to say what specific evidence the interrogators had against Fendt, if any. Their first question was

[131] Ibid., 1 December 1618 (p.m.).

[132] Ibid., 4 December 1618 (p.m.). Despite the apparent validation of his masculinity through his sexual behaviour, Fendt proved much weaker than any of the witch-suspects whom he looked after. When threatened for the only time with thumbscrews, he 'cries out to God with tearful eyes, he knows nothing'. He then resumed his confession.

[133] Fendt's trade was given at the beginning of his interrogation, ibid., 1 December 1618 (p.m.).

the general one about his improper activities in the town hall.[134] Fendt himself introduced the Wäscher Barbel at this point. Why Fendt did so, and why he went on to confess his other sexual adventures, one cannot now know. Given the situation in which he found himself, it was probably a good strategy to admit to an occasional sin in order to avoid torture, but he did not need to give such a detailed testimony. Fendt may have been discomfited by the situation in which he found himself, perhaps fearing that his interrogators and erstwhile employers knew a great deal more about his past conduct than they were then letting on. Even if they did, one suspects that he could have successfully protested his innocence of these misdemeanours if he had wanted to. The women in his deposition were witches, whores and murderers. In contrast, he had taken an oath which was meant to attest to his professional and spiritual probity.[135] Fendt may also have taken the opportunity, like perhaps Maria Mayr when telling of her adultery with Hans, to make a spiritual confession before the witch commissioners in order to unburden himself of the weight of sin he had begun to feel since the earnest reformism of the new regime had replaced the relaxed humanism of its predecessor.

Whatever Fendt's motivation for testifying to his fornication, its existence suggests that he was not sufficiently reconstructed, even sixty-five years after the Council of Trent, to reject the traditional social role ascribed to the prostitute (here including the witch-suspect).[136] She remained a means of sexual relief in Fendt's case for the Catholic man away from home and the widower. In this context, only fornication on the part of a woman could be described in denigratory terms; it was she who acted the role of Eve and tempted the man to sin. Lorenz Fendt was not described as a sinner or fornicator in the interrogation transcript. The witch commissioners, on the other hand, actively tried

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[134] Ibid., 1 December 1618 (p.m.).

[135] The oaths for the prison warders do not seem to have survived. There is, however, a copy of the oath taken by the witch commissioners' scribe Balthasar Rinck (undated but referring to Johann Christoph von Westerstetten) in which he confirmed that he would be pious and faithful in his duties, Hochstift Eichstätt Literalien 27, "Dienstes-Eide der Eichstättischen Beamten. 1472–1652 'Juraments'", f. 148r.

[136] Even though prostitutes had been transformed in law and theology from a 'necessary evil' into a threat to morality over the course of the sixteenth century (Rublack, *The Crimes of Women in Early Modern Germany*, p. 9), there was a general disregard for this new outlook among some groups of clients (Roper, "Was there a Crisis in Gender Relations in Sixteenth-Century Germany?", in ead., *Oedipus and the Devil*, pp. 37–52 (p. 47)).

to cast Maria Mayr in the role of 'whore' for her attempt to get pregnant by her own husband; and old Anderle regarded Catharina Ströbl, like Mayr a woman from the more influential families in Eichstätt, to be a 'whore' and therefore sexually available. The comparatively light sentences which were probably imposed on Fendt and his colleagues also suggest that whilst the witch commissioners did not want to employ men of dubious morality, they were more concerned to eradicate the heresy of the witches.

Men employed in the town hall in Eichstätt therefore took the opportunity offered by the vulnerability of their female charges to exert traditional male rights over the bodies of dishonourable women. In all probability prison watchers everywhere were used to abusing female prisoners in this way, although in Eichstätt there seem to have been few occasions on which they could have done so when there was no witch persecution.[137] One does not come across such abuses too often in criminal sources because the treatment of the criminal suspects in custody (the provision of food and clothing, and the prescribed daily regimes) were administrative matters which generally fell outside the jurisdiction of the court. Only when the maltreatment of suspects was exposed by reform-minded men like the Eichstätt witch commissioners, does one find a detailed record of the actual treatment of those in custody. One should also note that many of the Eichstätt witch-suspects were in some ways more vulnerable than women like Kunigunda Pronner who had been forced into fornication and then, allegedly, witchcraft by their poverty. These other women were morally culpable for their predicament because they came from honourable households, families whose menfolk dominated the most senior council positions. In allegedly choosing to disown the Catholic faith and submit themselves to the authority of the Devil, they had chosen to renounce any of their prior claims to social honour; they had made an intellectual, moral or emotional, rather than practical, decision to defile themselves. Given the circumstances which presented themselves then, did the town hall staff, generally (but not always) of a slightly lower class than the women brought into custody, also take the opportunity to metaphorically grab the noses of their social superiors by taking possession of their wives

[137] Between spring 1603 and September 1606, for example, thirteen felons were punished in Eichstätt, of whom only two were women (including Margretha Ehmenn), DiöAE, "Urfehdebuch", ff. 33v–60r. There is no record of prisoners who had committed misdemeanours and were remanded in custody.

and daughters sexually? This is a difficult question to answer. It is likely that the warders themselves did not analyse their motives too deeply. Rather than viewing their actions in terms of patriarchal ideology or class conflict, they may simply have taken the opportunity to fulfil their immediate personal desires, especially as drunkenness seems to have figured prominently in their tales of fornication with the witch-suspects. In this respect they may have held more ambiguous emotions about their charges. Hans seems to have had sex with Maria Mayr, yet he had taken a risk in helping the Mayrs to meet; he also continued to bring Maria drink after he had been suspended from his office. Anderle too continued to supply Maria Lang after he was sacked.

Fear

One striking feature of this investigation into Mayr's treatment is that none of the witnesses or the individuals about whom they spoke seem to have been afraid of the witch-suspects. Whilst the behaviour of the warders towards their charges was inexcusable, even in early modern terms, one can understand their ambivalence towards the suspects' alleged power as witches. The warders had been given some measure of protection by their employment and the incarceration and interrogation of the witch. The town hall was not, however, protected from the Devil who was believed to appear occasionally to the suspects imprisoned there,[138] nor could it protect those employed in it from witches who might visit from outside. Anna Wunder, for example, was later identified as a witch and arrested, but she persistently asked Barbel Halm for permission to see Mayr.[139] In her dealings with Wunder, the Raffelin and others, Halm did not express any concern that these women too might be witches. By November 1618, well over a year into the last phase of persecution, she must have known from the witch commission-

[138] On 3 July 1618, Valtin Lanng revoked his entire testimony of the past three and a half months. Over the next four sessions of interrogation the commissioners tried to find out why he had done so. At first he blamed Father Michael for telling him to do this. Lanng finally relented under torture and confirmed his previous confession, but the interrogators asked three times if the Devil had gone to him in custody (clearly they could not accept that Father Michael would have urged a prisoner to revoke his testimony). Lanng denied that the Devil had appeared to him, and the interrogations were adjourned, StAN, Hexenakten 48 (V. Lanng), 3 July 1618 (a.m.), 13 July 1618 (p.m.), 28 July 1618 (p.m.), 17 August 1618 (a.m. and p.m.).

[139] Anna Wunder was executed on 22 August 1620, DiöAE, "Urfehdebuch", ff. 188r–v.

ers' scribes and the executioner, who did some of his socialising in the town hall, that the witch-suspects were supposed to have many secret accomplices within the community.[140] Yet she did not report the visits to the witch commissioners who may have interpreted them in a more sinister light than Halm was doing. One cannot state now what she actually thought of these particular women, but her failure to mention these contacts to the appropriate authorities and her willingness to act as gate-keeper to the prisoners suggests that she was not too concerned about the alleged threat posed by the witch sect.

This interpretation of Halm's attitude towards the suspects in her care and the possible witches who were still hiding in the community is reflected in the actions of the women and Georg Mayr who sought and sometimes gained access to those in custody. When they were able to secure them, their meetings tended to be intimate affairs, sex between the Mayrs, an hour or more of discussion between Mayr and the Raffelin, and attempts to bribe Anna Harding not to name her clients and a fellow prostitute. Possibly nobody in the community could believe that Mayr or Harding were witches. The lack of accusations originating independently among the inhabitants of the district of Eichstätt against any individual for any reason (either perceived malevolent witchcraft or the resolution of an ongoing conflict) points to a general incredulity at the intensity of the persecution from 1617, as does the inability of the witnesses to provide corroborative testimony about the misfortune allegedly done to them. In this district therefore there seems to have been no fear of witches. The experiences in much of the rest of the principality—Windteis's successful attempt to have his wife released and the limited number of witches arrested in these areas—suggest that the same was true in the other districts. Apart from the accusers in the isolated cases of witchcraft which did not contribute to an increase in persecution in the territory, only the interrogators and reformist clergy exhibited a fear of the witch.

This lack of fear about the women and men arrested as witches in Eichstätt has been a dominant theme of this book. I have, however,

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[140] At the end of her interrogation, Barbel Halm complained that some of the watchers always wanted fish to eat. She went on to observe that one of the commissioners' scribes, his wife, the watchers, Mathes Hörman and his assistant once drank together in her husband's room. They did so between one and three o'clock, although she did not state whether this was in the afternoon or at night, StAN, Hexenakten 48 (B. Halm), 5 December 1618 (a.m.). One might also note here that those who worked most closely with the (dishonourable) executioner did not exclude him from their society.

avoided discussing the one episode in the Eichstätt Hexenakten which might be used to undermine this general conclusion. During the course of her imprisonment, Barbara Reuter managed to escape from custody. She did so at eleven o'clock one night just before Christmas 1627 and hid in the garden of the Sailerin (the ropemaker's wife, but not the witch Judith Obermayr) which was close to the town hall. Seven hours later, at five o'clock in the morning, the Sailerin looked out of her window and saw Reuter who wanted to borrow some clothing from her. The Sailerin's response was to cry out: 'O Jesus Mary, O Jesus Mary, there's a witch'.[141] At this, Reuter was re-arrested.[142] One might argue that the Sailerin's response demonstrates the fear and panic which had gripped the townsfolk of Eichstätt over the course of the persecutions. As Ruth Gänstaller has noted, relations between Reuter and the Sailerin had presumably once been good because Reuter chose to seek help from her.[143] Reuter, however, had been in custody since 11 January 1621, that is, for almost seven years, and during this time her former friends may have come to believe that she was a witch.[144] They may have come to accept the logic of the persecution process which showed quite clearly that the witch sect had penetrated deep into the local community, and they were nervous about who else among them might also be a witch.[145]

One might, however, interpret the Sailerin's response to seeing her former friend in her garden differently. The town hall was a secure building. I do not mean this in the sense that it was difficult to abscond from it—Reuter had simply picked locks with a nail.[146] Rather, the inhabitants of Eichstätt thought of it as a secure building. It was one of the

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[141] StAN, Hexenakten 46 (B. Reuter), 20 December 1627.

[142] Despite her escape, Reuter's interrogation was not resumed until four months later, ibid., 17 April 1628. It seems that the interrogators thought they would not be able to make her confess even after this event which must have caused Reuter to despair of ever being released. After an intensive series of interrogations early in 1621, the commissioners had tired of Reuter's resistance and decided that she was 'foolish', ibid., 3 April 1624 (or 1625). They only interrogated her nine times in the period 1622–6. Early in 1627, they had new information and confronted Reuter with the Weissin Beckin who reported that the suspect had met with Schneider Caspar and his wife three times outside the town hall, ibid., 12 February 1627 (p.m.). Reuter was then left to languish in custody until her escape, only being interrogated once on 28 July 1627.

[143] Gänstaller, "Zur Geschichte des Hexenwahns", p. 19.

[144] StAN, Hexenakten 46 (B. Reuter), 11 January 1621.

[145] This interpretation of this incident is to be found in Gänstaller, "Zur Geschichte des Hexenwahns", pp. 17–19.

[146] StAN, Hexenakten 46 (B. Reuter), 17 April 1628.

few local institutions in which council employees were available, if not awake, at night; it was guarded. It was also the place of administration and justice, a site from which control was exerted over the community by the leading families of the town, a purpose symbolized, perhaps unintentionally, by its position overlooking the market square. More importantly, very few criminals, apart from witches, found themselves locked up in the town hall and, as far as one can tell, they only ever left to receive punishment. Psychologically, therefore, the walls of the town hall could not be breached. They contained danger and protected the bishop's subjects. It would have been a huge shock for the Sailerin to have seen any prisoner, of whatever category, in her garden early in the morning. Reuter simply should not have been there, even if she was innocent. After all, there had been no official ritual marking her release from custody, no proclamation, no notice, no gossip circulating in the community about her impending acquittal. However Reuter came to be outside her prison and in the Sailerin's garden, whether by human or diabolical means, she was evading justice. In this she was not presenting herself as innocent, for an innocent defendant would allow justice to take its course and would not think of becoming an outlaw, someone condemned to wander the countryside begging, stealing, prostituting one's body, without hope of reconciliation with her community, family and household or the security they offered. The Sailerin would also have seen someone who looked very much like a witch, with unkempt, flowing hair, a withered body, and only rags for clothes, especially in the darkness early on a December morning (see Ill. 5).[147]

In this account, the Sailerin did not have to be expressing any communal fear of witches when she gave the hue and cry which led to Reuter's recapture. She did not have to believe that any of the suspects detained in the town hall, including Reuter, or those who had already been executed were really witches until the moment of her encounter with the escapee. Even then, she may only have come to the conclusion that Barbara Reuter and not other known suspects were witches. If the Sailerin had believed the propaganda of the Church and its witch commission since 1617 that there was a witch sect operating in the town, she would seem to have been in the minority. The prison

[147] Reuter did not know how old she was, but in 1621 she had been living with her husband for perhaps twenty-five years (she couldn't be sure), StAN, Hexenakten 46 (B. Reuter), 11 January 1621. In 1627, therefore, she was likely to have been in her fifties.

Ill. 5. Nikolaus Manuel Deutsch, 'Old witch', late sixteenth century, drawing. Bildarchiv Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Berlin [BPK 42788]. Reproduced with kind permission.

warders and Barbel Halm were ambivalent, if not sceptical, about the reality of the charges against the witches in their care. Georg Mayr, Abraham Windteis, Anna Wunder, the Raffelin, Barbara Rabel, Eva Susanna Moringer, and the cook Anna Maria exhibited no fear of the witch-suspects whom they sought to free or visit. Indeed, the last four, as early as 1618–19 had worked out precisely how the persecutions were escalating and sought to protect themselves from being named by the suspects as accomplices. It seems also that Reuter had been able to meet with other townsfolk who assured her that they believed in her innocence. During one alleged meeting between Reuter and the Schneider Caspar and his wife, the Weissin Beckin reported that the tailor had said to Reuter, 'O Ketterlin, you are of a pious heart and I know that you are pious and upright'. The couple also promised to help Reuter as much as they could.[148] It is likely that most of the inhabitants of Eichstätt, whilst they probably would not have dismissed the existence of the isolated solitary witch (as the episode involving the wisewoman Magdalena Pößl shows) or perhaps the full-blown image of the witch sect, would also have refused to believe that their neighbours, friends and family members had been seduced into the heresy.

[148] StAN, Hexenakten 46 (B. Reuter), 12 February 1627 (p.m.). It is not clear why Caspar would have used what appears to be a diminutive of Catharina for Reuter. This meeting was one of three at which the Weissin Beckin reported that she had seen Reuter. Two had happened in Georg Höflein's cellar and one in Maler's garden; all were recent, that is, they had taken place when Reuter should have been in custody. Reuter's response to the confrontation is not recorded, nor were the other participants called to account for the meetings. One has no way, therefore, of getting to the truth of this deposition.

CONCLUSION

The fascicles of Eichstätt Hexenakten and related documents are one of the few sets of witchcraft sources which comprise, for the period from 1617, examples of the full range of working documents generated over many sessions of interrogation. The contents of the extant interrogation transcripts in particular allow one to challenge or modify several assumptions which have dominated modern witchcraft historiography: about how witch persecutions evolved and the role of local populations in sustaining them; about the prevailing social and cultural environments which provided the contexts for large-scale persecution; and about the gender and social status of the witch-suspects and popular attitudes towards them. They have also proved useful in reconstructing the social worlds of the men and women of the principality of Eichstätt.

Witchcraft

The Eichstätt prince-bishops played a significant, if minor role, in the history of early modern Germany. Martin von Schaumberg established the first seminary along the lines prescribed by the Council of Trent, Johann Conrad von Gemmingen was famous among his contemporaries for his garden, and Johann Christoph von Westerstetten was instrumental in the conversion to Catholicism of Gottfried Heinrich, count of Pappenheim, and Wolfgang Wilhelm, heir to the duchy of Pfalz-Neuburg. For the most part, however, the territory has been consigned to the historical shadows cast by its more prominent neighbours, the duchy of Bavaria, the Upper Palatinate, the margravate of Ansbach, and the prince-bishoprics of Würzburg and Bamberg. Even in terms of witch persecution, the events in Eichstätt, large enough in themselves to have provoked intensive research had they been isolated from any other major outbreak of witch-hunting, were neither as large nor as intense as those in these last two territories. For these reasons the persecutions have been glossed over and appended to studies which focus on either the other two Franconian ecclesiastical principalities or Bavaria. As a result, inaccurate statements made about the trials in the nineteenth century have persisted to the present.

Some modification of the chronological and geographical distribution of the Eichstätt persecutions has been necessary, but it is the severe reduction in the estimate of the number of witches executed in the principality which requires comment here. Rather than 'over 400' executions, there is now a maximum of 271 witchcraft trials or investigations for the period 1590–1631 (excluding the cases reported by the Ansbach *Obervogt* and the slander cases), not all of which ended in capital punishment. This figure is almost certainly an overestimate and a more accurate number would probably be nearer 240. This discrepancy in the data needs to be placed in its historiographical context. Whilst a re-evaluation of the data does not place the Eichstätt authorities' reputation as particularly vicious and violent witch-hunters in doubt, it should raise questions about the statistics commonly reproduced in the more general accounts of the witch-craze. There seems to be an assumption among historians that whatever their own researches show, the incomplete nature of judicial documentation means that there must have been other trials, even episodes of persecution, which have been lost to witchcraft studies. It is unlikely, however, that pamphleteers, chroniclers, jurists and other writers would have missed opportunities to comment on larger witch persecutions and the more sensational witch trials, and thus ensure future knowledge of them even where the case documents have not survived. It has also long been clear that some, mainly Protestant, territories escaped full-scale witch-hunting, although this knowledge seems to have been written out of English surveys of the phenomenon.[1] Such territories tended to avoid witch persecution because the local secular authorities resisted either popular or ecclesiastical pressure to prosecute alleged witches. In Eichstätt, too, there were periods (notably Gemmingen's reign) and places which

[1] Major German territories which experienced little or no persecution included Ansbach (C. Scott Dixon, *The Reformation and Rural Society: The Parishes of Brandenburg-Ansbach-Kulmbach, 1528–1603* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 193), Augsburg (Roper, "Witchcraft and Fantasy", pp. 199–200), Rothenburg ob der Tauber (Alison Rowlands, *Witchcraft Narratives in Germany: Rothenburg 1561–1652* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003)), and the Palatinate (Jürgen Michael Schmidt, *Glaube und Skepsis. Die Kurpfalz und die abendländische Hexenverfolgung 1466–1685* (Bielefeld: Verlag für Regionalgeschichte, 2000)). Neither Levack nor Maxwell-Stuart, authors of standard surveys of European witch persecution in English, for example, note any exceptions to the general rule that Germany was the heartland of the witch-craze (Levack, *The Witch-Hunt in Early Modern Europe*, and P.G. Maxwell-Stuart, *Witchcraft in Europe and the New World, 1400–1800* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001)). German surveys, such as Behringer, *Hexen. Glaube, Verfolgung, Vermarktung*, do tend to refer to these exceptions (p. 59).

were not affected by the events at other times or in other parts of the principality. The two seventeenth-century phases of persecution there were concentrated on the town of Eichstätt and were not mirrored in the outlying districts. It is possible that more detailed analyses of other large-scale witch persecutions like that in Eichstätt will be subject to a similar revision of the local geography of witch-hunting and the statistical data, especially where the data have not been scrutinized for some time.[2] Estimates such as 50,000 executions in Europe from about 100,000 suspects may well therefore be found to exaggerate the scale of early modern witch persecution.[3] If this re-evaluation of the data did produce a discrepancy on the scale of that for Eichstätt, then historians who aim to collate, summarise and extrapolate the experiences of witch persecution across the Old and New Worlds will have to think hard about how they present their statistics.

Historians also need to reconsider the causes of the witch persecutions. Rainer Walz cites a compelling list of local types of conflict which may have precipitated individual witchcraft episodes in Lippe. Walz's analysis is an important critique and development of functionalist explanations of witchcraft accusations. Like all functionalist accounts of witch trials in early modern Europe, however, it tends not to provide a suitable model with which to explain the outbreak of widespread persecution in the late sixteenth century. Conflict and tensions between neighbours or political rivals had characterized the witch trials of medieval Europe and continued to be manifested in the isolated witchcraft accusations of the eighteenth century and after; they were not specific to the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.[4] Wolfgang Behringer's multicausal analysis linking agrarian crises and the problems associated with them, notably epidemic disease and price rises, to social change and the attitudes of politicians and theologians of both the Catholic and Protestant confessions

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[2] The case of Würzburg, for example, would benefit from a re-evaluation in the light of international research on witchcraft since the second edition of Merzbacher, *Hexenprozesse in Franken*. Gehm has recently produced a thorough description and analysis of the Bamberg trials, *Hexenverfolgung im Hochstift Bamberg*.

[3] For these figures, see Robin Briggs, "Women as Victims? Witches, Judges and the Community", *French History*, 5 (1991), pp. 438–50 (p. 439).

[4] The case of Lady Alice Kyteler and her associates in Kilkenny, Ireland, for example, had its origins in both social and familial conflict, Cohn, *Europe's Inner Demons*, pp. 198–200. Owen Davies has cited nineteenth- and early twentieth-century English examples of Keith Thomas's 'charity-refused' model of witchcraft accusation in his *Witchcraft, Magic and Culture 1736–1951* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999), p. 175.

is one of the more sophisticated approaches which address the chronological problem.[5] I am not convinced, however, that it can be applied widely. The Eichstätt experience shows that far from facilitating persecution, epidemics of plague appeared towards the end of the first and third phases in the principality. Outbreaks of plague in some administrative districts in 1606 and 1611 did not produce accusations of witchcraft there; and the persecution of 1603 occurred at a time of stable prices. There is no evidence to show that agrarian crisis in Eichstätt was a factor in facilitating and then sustaining witch persecution. If witches were being blamed for long-term agricultural problems, then one would expect individuals to be supporting the process of persecution either by accusing suspected witches before the courts or by confirming acts of harm by malevolent witchcraft when they were called as witnesses. Neither of these things happened in Eichstätt. Nor did witches construct convincing narratives of weather-magic. One also has to question why most of those prosecuted came from the town of Eichstätt and in particular its secular elite whose livelihoods were not dependent upon agriculture. Finally, one has to return to the work of Christian Pfister on which much of this part of Behringer's model rests. Pfister has argued that populations adapted well to short- to medium-term crises, and that the social disruption caused by these events was not manifested in extreme and destructive ways.

If agrarian crisis does not help explain the outbreaks of persecution in Eichstätt, what of social change? There is a problem of evidence here because there is no comprehensive history of Eichstätt in this period. It seems that Eichstätt remained a centre of local economic exchange and did not benefit from the commercialization of other parts of Franconia and Bavaria. One cannot, however, point to the negative effects which such an area might then have experienced in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. There is no evidence of significant pauperization or emigration towards more prosperous towns for example. Neither do the witch interrogation transcripts suggest that there was some kind of class conflict in which the poorer or richer elements of the town of Eichstätt were using the witch persecutions to express a new social attitude.

If interpersonal conflict and agrarian crisis fail to account for the phenomenon, religion, especially Catholic reform, does offer an expla-

[5] Behringer, *Hexenverfolgung in Bayern*, pp. 96–121.

nation of witch-hunting. Behringer has suggested that it is inadequate to explain the increase in persecution by pointing to the progress of the Catholic Reformation.[6] Rather, he argues that the Counter-Reformation, continuing Protestant reform and millenarianism, witch persecution and a general 'hardening' of attitudes among the social and political elites towards forms of secular culture which exhibited a dubious moral character, were all manifestations of the same set of crises which beset the late sixteenth century.[7] This alignment does not work for Eichstätt because agrarian crisis does not seem to have affected the course of witch persecution at all. It is also difficult to argue that reform was somehow pushed along by crisis. Certainly crisis may have attracted individuals to one or other form of strident belief and it may have induced an urgency to reform which had been lacking in the early to mid-sixteenth century among some Catholics. The reform process itself, however, was not linked to crisis, but to personality and opportunity. The cathedral chapter in Eichstätt was resistant to reform right up until the early years of the reign of Johann Christoph von Westerstetten. Before then reform had been piecemeal. Despite the seminary founded in the 1560s, the bishops failed, for example, to enforce token legislation against *Fastnacht* and other traditional practices, and continued to allow couples to postpone marriage indefinitely. The chapter refused to accept either the Roman Rite or the Jesuits until after Westerstetten's election, and even then only after a fight. The secular elite and larger occupational groupings, like the cloth-workers, were also resistant to change. The interrogation transcripts demonstrate that members of this elite continued to hold ambivalent attitudes towards sex before marriage, prostitution, abortion, late-night drinking and disorderly festivities. There is no sense that the secular political elite sought to impose social discipline in the manner of the councillors of nearby Augsburg, for example.[8] In this they reflected the attitude of the rulers of the smaller Catholic states of south-western Germany.[9] Westerstetten and the pro-Jesuit party within the chapter

[6] Ibid., p. 119.
[7] Ibid., p. 119.
[8] On Reformation Augsburg in this context, see, for example, Roper, *The Holy Household*, and B. Ann Tlusty, "Water of Life, Water of Death: the Controversy over Brandy and Gin in Early Modern Augsburg", *Central European History*, 31 (1998), pp. 1–30.
[9] The lack of confessionalization 'from above' in the sense of social and moral disciplining by the rulers of these Catholic territories is observed in Marc R. Forster,

may or may not have influenced the course of the early persecutions of 1590–2 and 1603, but they were wholly responsible for the outbreak of 1617. At that point the eradication of the witch sect, undertaken by the new witch commission, arrived as part of a package of reform and recatholicization measures rigorously imposed on both the principality and the wider bishopric. Westerstetten's reign was, in fact, a model of social disciplining (by the ecclesiastical authorities) and confessionalization.[10] Agrarian crisis and individual conflicts had nothing to do with his actions at this late stage in the Eichstätt experience; his views had been formed thirty years earlier.

Westerstetten, the other Catholic rulers in southern Germany and their contemporaries further afield, like Ferdinand of Bavaria, archbishop of Cologne, were responsible for a significant proportion of the witch trials in Germany, some 6,500 of about 20,000 executions, most between about 1580 and 1630. Given that these rulers were all reformers, all pupils or sponsors of the Jesuits, and all maintained close ties with the university in Ingolstadt and the ducal court in Bavaria, it seems contrived to argue that their basic motivation was the crises which some, but not all of them experienced. A more plausible explanation seems to lie in their common education and theological sympathies, and shared sources of knowledge about the witch sect and its eradication. Those Catholic rulers, like Gemmingen, who experienced exactly the same crises as Westerstetten but who had been educated in Paris and Italy seem to have been less likely to engage in the persecution of witches.[11] When they did so the persecution did not last as long nor

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Catholic Revival in the Age of the Baroque: Religious Identity in Southwest Germany, 1550–1750 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), p. 15.

[10] Forster's criticisms of the confessionalization thesis of Wolfgang Reinhard and Heinz Schilling are based on his findings that confessionalization was a process of negotiation at all levels, and particularly the popular rather than the political, in southwestern Germany, ibid., pp. 14–20. Westerstetten's actions as prince-bishop would suggest, however, that he was attempting to impose Tridentine Catholicism on his subjects in the institutional manner which characterizes Wolfgang Reinhard and Heinz Schilling (eds.), *Die Katholische Konfessionalisierung* (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 1995). For a south-eastern German description of this same process, see also Philip M. Soergel, *Wondrous in His Saints: Counter-Reformation Propaganda in Bavaria* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), pp. 75–98.

[11] There may be a connection here with the different approach to witchcraft prosecution in Spain and Italy. The aim of the various Inquisitions, which had jurisdiction over the crime, was to correct rather than punish belief. They had a different demonological outlook which saw witchcraft as a delusion, and placed restrictions on the use of torture and the type of evidence permitted in witchcraft cases. See, for example, Henningsen, *The Witches' Advocate*, and Ruth Martin, *Witchcraft and the Inquisition in Venice* (Oxford:

affect as many people. One might add that the persecutions conducted by the group of pro-Jesuit, pro-Bavarian Catholic witch-hunters stopped in about 1630 for two reasons: their almost simultaneous removal from office either by death or by war;[12] and the increasing strength of a party opposed to persecution among the Jesuits and others in Bavaria.[13] At this time crisis was ongoing and in the south-eastern territories of the Holy Roman Empire increasing as towns like Eichstätt were sacked and razed to the ground, but witch persecution went into sharp decline. One can argue that rulers had to divert their energies elsewhere, but, of course, they never had to expend their energies on persecution in the first place.

Gender and society

There is no doubt that the witch-figure in early modern Europe was consistently female. Demonological representations of the witch were reinforced by accounts of persecutions and trials which circulated in the vernacular and which demonstrated to their readers that most witches who came before the courts were women. The statistics which have since been collated for the period of witch persecution bear this observation out. Where should historians look for explanations of the greater proportion of women among those executed as witches? The problem with most analyses of this question of the last thirty years is

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Basil Blackwell, 1989). One should, however, bear in mind that an early seventeenth-century opinion on torture from the university of Padua submitted to the court council in Munich advised that torture could proceed on the basis of an accumulation of denunciations against a suspected witch, Behringer, *Hexenverfolgung in Bayern*, p. 272. A connection with French procedure is more difficult to ascertain. Regions of France, Lorraine and the Pays de Labourd, for example, experienced intense bouts of witch persecution in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, and several important demonologists and witch-hunting judges were also French (including Nicolas Rémy, Jean Bodin, Henri Boguet and Pierre de Lancre). Within the jurisdiction of the parlement of Paris, appeals to it in cases of witchcraft only became automatic in 1624, and therefore after Gemmingen's death, Alfred Soman, "The Parlement of Paris and the Great Witch Hunt (1565–1640)", *Sixteenth-Century Journal*, 9 (1978), pp. 31–44.

[12] Westerstetten left Eichstätt in 1631, Ehrenberg (prince-bishop of Würzburg) died in the same year and Fuchs von Dornheim (prince-bishop of Bamberg) died in 1633. Of the other major witch-hunters active in the 1620s, Greiffenklau and Schweikhard (archbishop-electors of Mainz) and Mespelbrunn (prince-bishop of Würzburg) had died in 1629, 1626 and 1622 respectively, Behringer, *Hexen. Glaube, Verfolgung, Vermarktung*, p. 57.

[13] Behringer, *Hexenverfolgung in Bayern*, pp. 241–331.

that they examine small-scale witchcraft episodes and hope to extrapolate from them a theory which can be applied to a wider context. I do not doubt that in these episodes witches were identified partly by their sex, that Barbe Mallebarbe, Margery Stanton, Engel Flake, Barbara Ruf, Anna Ebeler or Ursula Grön became the focus of accusations because it was relatively easy to equate them with the stereotypical female witch-figure. The problem comes with the extrapolation of any theory to take account of the actual number of women brought to trial for the crime of witchcraft. The isolated witch trial was an altogether different phenomenon to the medium- to large-scale witch persecution. In the latter there were few or no accusations. The escalation of the persecution was a product of the dynamics of the interrogation process, and this is how most women accused of witchcraft found themselves before witch commissioners or other judges.

Transferring the explanations of the presence of female witches in the smaller witchcraft episodes to their predominance in the larger ones seems to be a simple process. The assumption, although it is rarely articulated, seems to be that the women under interrogation in these larger witch-hunts named accomplices with whom they were in some kind of conflict or whom they could easily imagine in the role of the stereotypical witch. The transcripts themselves, however, tell a different story. I have analysed the Eichstätt transcripts, but the analysis is one that I think may be applicable to other episodes of witch persecution and better explains the number of women arrested and executed for witchcraft. The interrogation process was highly stressful for the suspect. She had to endure prolonged imprisonment, intimate physical inspections, torture and psychological torment. Once she was finally broken by the interrogators and confessed to being a witch, she then had to construct a confession narrative which was plausible to both herself and her tormentors. The interrogators served as guides in this process of story-telling by supplying the broad narrative outlines in the form of leading questions, but the suspect had to provide the detail. The transcripts show that this was a process of negotiation as the suspect tried to give a correct version of, for example, her seduction into the witch sect. Much of her testimony had to be grounded in real experiences, including her fantasies, for it to sound plausible. Where it was not, as in the tales of weather-magic, the confessions are vague and inconclusive. When it came to naming accomplices, the suspect was given a context (the nocturnal gathering) which mirrored her own experiences of wedding, baptismal and other communal celebrations.

She therefore peopled that diabolical gathering with individuals she would have seen at normal gatherings, her friends and neighbours. If women tended to name more women in this context, and men more men, this was only because one tended to be more intimate socially with people of the same sex. These gender-aligned associations were not, however, the product of patriarchal ideology. They emerged as a result of finding the most efficient contemporary means of running a household. The household was the joint responsibility of husband and wife, and it suited both partners to form associations with others who shared their particular spheres of competence. It was an accident of history that these areas had become gendered.[14] As most of those arrested at the beginning of the phase of persecution in 1617 were women, the interrogators soon had a pool of female accomplices from which to draw further suspects. Hence, the persecutions in Eichstätt focused on women, and women from a particular class too, the urban political and craft elite.

There was, however, another process of selection which complemented the one in which the suspects participated unwittingly. The interrogators were excluding most of the men named in the transcripts from arrest until about a decade after the final phase of persecution began. A greater proportion of men were named among the accomplices of witches than were ever brought to trial in the principality. It seems that the witch commissioners could not accept that these men might also be seduced into the witch sect. This is not to say that they were necessarily misogynistic nor that they could not conceive of men as witches (the priest Reichard is one of the more notable men arrested in the period before 1627). Rather, these men were among those with whom they dealt on a daily basis in the political organization of the prince-bishopric, and they chose, I think, whether consciously or not, to protect them on those grounds. This was how the witch-trial documents came to represent a more extreme polarization of the sexes than existed on the ground in Eichstätt. As Joan Scott might argue, it is the process by which 'the appearance of timeless permanence in binary

[14] This is an implication of the work by Eleanor Leacock who has argued that egalitarian societies were transformed into stratified, and therefore unequal, ones as specialized trading systems evolved, Eleanor Leacock, "Women in Egalitarian Societies", in Renate Bridenthal, Claudia Koonz and Susan Stuard (eds.), *Becoming Visible: Women in European History* (2nd ed., Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1987), pp. 15–38. The division of roles between genders was a by-product of this economic process rather than the result of any biological imperative. It was not, therefore, a necessary development.

gender representation' was reinforced by the guardians of the most extreme form of idealistic patriarchy, the Counter-Reformation clergy.[15] Without their input in the selection of witch-suspects for interrogation, gender would have been a less significant feature of the typical Eichstätt witch. Indeed, his or her class would have been a much more dominant characteristic than it now appears from a casual glance at the data.

The transcripts also show, however, how women represented themselves to those in authority and to each other. They did not appear before the interrogators as witches or just women. They appeared as mothers, wives, daughters, employers, wedding guests, godparents, friends, neighbours and healers, assuming the identities most appropriate for the purpose at hand, that is, answering the interrogators' various questions, attempting first to present themselves as innocent of the crime of witchcraft and subsequently to construct a convincing confession narrative.[16] The male witch-suspects appeared in similar roles. They were able to do so because the questions asked by the interrogators were about inverted versions of the situations they knew intimately in everyday life. They were asked about eating, especially feasting, having sex and healing. These were situations which bound the community together and all of the suspects, regardless of gender, class or status, presented themselves as integrated into that wider community. It is also clear that many of the suspects were not abandoned by the community after they had been imprisoned. Family and friends continued to supply food and clothing for the women in custody and several sought illicit access to them. By different means—getting them pregnant or writing a series of letters protesting that the Eichstätt authorities were acting outside their jurisdiction—some husbands attempted to rescue their wives from custody; and Hans Bühler spent many years trying to restore his wife's honour through the imperial court in Speyer. There appears therefore to have been no widespread fear of the witch sect, and a corresponding incredulity about the arrests which had been made, even as early as 1618.

What one does not get from the transcripts therefore is an impression of a society in conflict, a society in which some women became marginalized as a result of social change and consequently became vul-

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[15] Scott, *Gender and the Politics of History*, pp. 43–4.

[16] I have borrowed this idea of shifting identities from Denise Riley, *Am I That Name? Feminism and the Category of 'Women' in History* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1988), p. 16.

nerable to accusations of witchcraft. I do not want, however, to present a rose-tinted view of the past. Some men, like the prison warders, did abuse the positions of authority given to them without any significant punishment once this abuse was exposed. Whilst patriarchy did exist, however, it did not always structure everyday relationships. These were often a product of ordinary needs and desires (interests and emotions, as Sabean would say) and they could cut across divisions of gender and class. Early modern witch persecutions should not therefore be understood as reflecting tensions within communities, nor should one assume that ordinary folk took the opportunity offered by the authorities' will to prosecute witches to either settle their individual conflicts or express the supposed fears and tensions engendered by the crises which they were experiencing.[17]

The image of early modern society which emerges from this book is more positive than that presented in most other histories of the witch persecutions. This is not because the Eichstätt case was in any fundamental way unique. It has emerged because I have asked different questions and made different assumptions. Rather than examine those staples of witchcraft historiography 'from below', the accusation depositions, I have looked at the confession narratives. The former, like any accusation of a criminal act, will only ever reveal a world of deep conflict because they had to convince a judge or, in England, a magistrate and a jury that a crime has been committed. They are part of the drama of the legal case and can in no way be said to reflect the reality of any episode of crime. It concerns me that the stories which these accusations tell are almost always identical and that one can find them repeated across Europe and in different media (pamphlets, plays, sermons, dialogues and demonologies). They would seem to be legal fictions in which certain tropes were adopted in order to persuade a judge or reader who would already have known that witchcraft episodes happened in such a way because he was familiar with the very same tales. In this respect I think that historians have not been sufficiently critical of their sources. The Eichstätt confession narratives, on the other hand, were a product of a process of negotiation between the interrogator

[17] Levack, for example, has suggested that witch-hunting led to a heightened fear of witches and active support of the persecution process. His argument, however, is reliant on the Popish Plot of 1678 in England and the Red Scares of 1919–20 and 1947–54 in the United States, rather than pertinent witch-hunting examples, Levack, *The Witch-Hunt in Early Modern Europe*, p. 176.

and the suspect which has in many cases been recorded. In these one finds an alternative story of early modern gender and society as the suspect tried to make sense of the questions asked of her. During this process of negotiation, the suspect exposed the ways in which they and their neighbours 'presented the flow of social processes and the nature of social relations to themselves and among themselves'.[18] Her purpose was not to persuade the interrogator that a particular criminal event had happened, but, once she had made the initial confession of witchcraft, to construct a story that would involve the minimum of physical and psychological duress. In this process other witch-suspects were drawn from among 'good neighbours' and friends, individuals with whom they chose to eat and drink and with whom they lived in peace.

[18] Sabean, *Power in the Blood*, p. 3.

APPENDIX 1

THE INTERROGATORY OF 1617

A note on the translation

The following interrogatory was drawn up in 1617 to aid the Eichstätt witch commissioners in their prosecution of witch-suspects. I have not attempted a literal translation because the document was more an annotated *aide-mémoire* for a handful of men than a fair copy drafted for wide circulation. Consequently, it is not always coherent or easy to understand. The translation which follows therefore offers the best meaning of each of the eighty-four items. I have omitted the final paragraphs which refer to the *Carolina* and the treatment of the suspect after their conviction. These are conventional in purpose, noting, for example, the time prescribed for the reflection on and confession of other sins.

The interrogatory

Interrogatory

What to discuss with the persons suspected of and imprisoned for witchcraft.

Interrogatory

What to discuss with the persons suspected of witchcraft before the evidence of the crime is revealed to them.

1. What is her name?
2. When was she born?
3. Who were her parents and what were their names? What position did they have? What was their trade or craft? Whether they lived well or ill together; whether they are still alive or dead; when they died and of what illness.
4. Where, from when and how she was brought up when she was young.

5. In what form and in what she was instructed when she was young; what she learnt.
6. What does she do now for her food and work? How old is she?
7. If she lives alone, and why she is not married.
8. If she is married, and how long she has been married.
9. If she married of her own will or with the foreknowledge of her parents and friends.
10. On what occasion did she come to know her spouse, and become betrothed to him? Also, who was he?
11. Whether they did not meet together at night and confer with each other alone.
12. Whether she had not previously, when single, had disorderly love with him, mixed with him in the flesh, or done such things willingly.
13. Where, when and how often such things had happened. Also, who paired them off together.
14. If she had not before or near to her wedding used superstitious things, or let them be used by others.
15. What they brought to each other and how they had sustained themselves up to now.
16. How they lived with each other during their marriage, and if they lived badly, what had been the cause.
17. If she had not during her marriage won disorderly love with others. On what occasion and at what opportunity this happened. Also, if she sought opportunities to fulfil her evil will. Whom she met and where, and what happened between them each time.
18. If she produced children during her marriage, how many, what they are called, how old they are, whether they are living or dead.
19. Where the living children are, how they were brought up, and what they learned. Also, how they live now.
20. When the dead children died, of what illness, and whether one sought and used remedies on them during the illness, and what they were.
21. Whether her husband still lives, or has died. When this happened; of what illness; how long he lay ill; how he became ill; what kind of remedy was used; who survived him.
22. With whom she mainly kept company, and at what opportunity she met with these persons.
23. Whether N. denounced person in particular was known to her, and in what way.

24. Whether she was aware, so as not to doubt, that these persons had been executed for witchcraft.

Because these persons named her also as one of this vice, and she is suspected through all sorts of *indicia*, she should not spend long, but tell the complete truth.

Interrogatory

What to examine the persons suspected of witchcraft about further after the criminal *indicia* have been presented to them.

25. How long ago was it that she had come to this vice?
26. Whether this happened here or at other places, and where.
27. On what occasion and at what opportunity she came to this vice.
28. When she first kept the company of the evil enemy.
29. In what form he appeared, what he promised to her, how his speech and form appeared to her, and what she gave him.
30. What he desired of her, whether and how often she mixed with him in the flesh.

Diabolical lust

31. Whether she had lust on that account, and how this happened to her. Where this happened.
32. What he further desired of her, and to which she agreed.

Promise

33. What she promised him; if and how she gave herself to him; whether this happened then or at another time, and in what way.

Denial of God

34. Whether she did not disown God and all the saints, and promise to harm people, livestock and fruit; with what words and in what form this happened.

Baptism

35. Whether she had been baptised by the evil spirit; what was done during it; what kind of material had been used; what he called her and she him; and who was there; what these people did.
36. Whether the evil enemy came to her again later; what he did with her each time; if he mixed with her in the flesh again; in what way and in what form did this happen.

Further meetings with the Devil. Gatherings and travel

37. Whether she had such meetings with the evil spirit not just alone, but also with other people, and whether such happened at public or strange gatherings; at what time these happened; at what place; at what opportunity they came together; what she did at such gatherings; and how often they happened.
38. How they went to such places, whether she went there by herself, or was taken by the evil spirit.
39. Who registered the participants at the gathering; how she had been taken away to it; on what she sat; what she needed for this; where she travelled to, and how they could get away in the dark night.
40. *NB* Whether her household members did not notice, and what she used for this.
41. When she appeared at the gatherings, what did she see there, and what did she do?

Worship of the Devil

42. Whether she worshipped the evil spirit, what honour she did to him, by what means did this happen, and who gave her instructions about it.

Annual sacrifices

43. Whether she did this alone or with others and, other than her, who these persons were; when, where and in what way it happened.
44. In what form the evil spirit appeared, and what he did.

Meals

45. Whether she also went to meals; where and when they occurred; how the table was prepared; who sat at the table; where she sat; who sat next to her, to the left or to the right, above or opposite her; and in what form.

Food

46. What kind of food and drink were served; in what vessels; whether bread and salt were present; whether she sat [TEAR]; whom she brought to it, and who brought her.

Conversation at the meals

47. What kind of conversation was there at the meals; what [INK STAIN], each time; whom she spoke with or listened to.
48. Who served food and drink at the table; whether and how they saw in the dark night; what kind of light was present; and from where this, as everything else, was brought.

Accomplices

49. Whether accomplices were also there and how they came there.

Dancing

50. Whether she danced, with whom, in what way and manner; [who] else she saw at the dance and in what form, as evil spirits or people.

Evil communication

51. What kind of communication she had at the same meetings; what was said or done to her, or she saw or heard of others.

Fornication

52. Whether she fornicated at the same meetings, with whom, in what form, when and how often; whether she saw it [ ], where, and what time.
53. How long these meetings lasted, what happened at the end and she went home again.
54. What she saw, heard or otherwise encountered on the way.

Humiliation of God

55. Whether she had not, on the instructions of the evil spirit, humiliated God; with what words, actions or gestures did this occur; did she do it by herself or with others; who was it; when and where did it happen.

Humiliation of the saints

56. What she thought of the Holy Mother of God, Our Lady, and the other dear saints, and said of them; and in what way she [did] this, by herself or with others, how often, at what place, and at what time.

How she carries herself at church services

57. How she appears at church services.
58. Whether she went to the service of the Holy Mass, with what intention, opinion and worship; if and what she prayed.

Confession

59. Whether and how often she confessed during the year, where and when; whether she did so earnestly and repenting of her sins; whether she confessed this vice too; OR [sic] why she concealed it.
60. Whether and how often she took communion during the year; where and at what time; with what opinion she did this.

Desecration of the Holy Host

61. Whether she ingested the Holy Host or sometimes took it out of her mouth again; when, where and how often this happened; and where she put it.

Relics

62. Whether she harmed the Holy Host; when, where, in what way, how often; who was there and helped or advised her.

Seduction

63. If and whom she seduced into this vice; on what occasion; at whose instigation; with whose advice or assistance; where and when this happened.
64. Whether she harmed anybody in life or limb or did good by herself or at the instigation of the evil enemy; when this happened; for what reason; on what occasion; by what means; at what time; where; in whose presence or with whose help; how it happened and what resulted from it; if and how they helped.

Use of ointments and poisonous powder

65. Whether she received ointments, poisonous powder and such from the evil spirit to this end; how often and when she used them; where she kept them.
66. Whether and if she placed after [ ]; for what reason; if and how she prepared it; who helped her with it; at what time and place it happened.

Killing children

67. Whether she [killed children] before or after the baptism, by herself or with others; with whose help; at what time and place.
68. Whether she crippled anyone or otherwise harmed bodies; by what means; for what reason; with whose help; to whom, where, and when this happened.

Entering houses

69. Whether she didn't go into other people's houses and go up to the sleepers; when, where, with whom, and how often it happened; what did she see and hear or otherwise encounter there.

Causing infertility

70. Whether she did not, out of enmity, cause infertility and misfortune between spouses and others; for what reason; by what advice and

with what help; by what means; where and with whom it happened; and how this again turned out.

Exhumation of children

71. Whether she did not help exhume children; where and when it happened; who was there; how she prepared beforehand; where she put the children; and what she did with them.

Digging up and burial

72. Whether she did not dig anything up to cause harm and misfortune; what it was; when and where it happened; who was there and advised or helped with it.

Weather-making

73. Whether, when and how often, and at what place she made weather; with what intention she did this; at whose instigation or at whose advice, and in whose presence; what she used; and what happened.

Entry into cellars and chambers

74. Whether and how often she entered these; when and at what place; who was with her; what did she drink, out of what; how long; what she saw, heard or did in there otherwise.

Shapeshifting

75. Whether she did not change into other forms; why, how, when and by what means did it happen.
76. What other magic and evil did she cause; and what harm followed from it.

Salvation and damnation

77. Whether she did not at times regret this vice and remember the ruin of her soul; what she thought about her salvation or damnation; and what she imagined of the Devil in this respect.
78. If she did not take the examples of such malevolent persons daily to heart, that she made herself much better; why it did not happen.
79. Whether she returns to God and, through earnest repentance of her sins and bringing to an end her well-deserved temporal punishment, flees eternal damnation, and desires to achieve eternal salvation.

Interrogatory

What to discuss with the persons who have confessed to witchcraft when they again revoke their confession.

Revocation

80. Whether she remembers her confession.
81. What is the reason that she again withdraws from it?
82. When she fled from such forgiveness, who instructed and advised her to do it; whether the evil spirit did not inspire her to do this; when he was with her; what he said and did to her.
83. Whether other persons did not give her instructions to do it; who; she should report the correct reason with which it is not necessary to get the truth from her with torture and pain.
84. She should consider her soul's health. She would not avoid authority. It is certainly better to suffer a little temporal punishment than to wait in eternal damnation.

APPENDIX 2

OCCUPATIONS OF SUSPECTED WITCHES OR THEIR HOUSEHOLDS

Although good guesses can be made for the occupation of each of the suspects or their households, it has not been possible to determine it in all cases. Where the guess cannot be confirmed, it has been excluded from this table. The primary occupational category used in the collation of the data was the suspect's own stated occupation (hence cook, midwife, healer and servant were occupations stated by female suspects). The secondary category, where a primary one was not given, was the suspect's current or last husband's council position or occupation. In one case, the doctor, the father's occupation was used. The data for the number of men in each trade has been taken from Buchner.[1] The table does not include data about the witch-suspects who came from the villages in the district of Eichstätt, hence the lack of data on horseherds, for example. It does not list the number of clergy either, so no figure is given here for the number of priests resident in the town. The growing number of religious institutions in the town at this time suggest that the number of clergy may well have been several hundred. The list is ordered by number of suspects from each occupational group and then by the number of tradesmen recorded over the period 1589–1618.

Trade	Female witch-suspects	Male witch-suspects	Number of men in the trade/office, 1589–1618
Baker	12	2	139
Mayor	3	4	8
Trader	3	3	10
Innkeeper	4	2	34
Butcher	6	–	59
Brewer	5	1	70
Cobbler	3	1	35
Cook	4	–	–
Smith	3	–	22

[1] Buchner, "Eichstätter Familienbuch", pp. 7–32, 446 and 456–8.

Table (*cont.*)

Trade	Female witch-suspects	Male witch-suspects	Number of men in the trade/ office, 1589–1618
Tailor	3	–	66
Councillor	2	1	–
Judge	1	2	–
Belt-maker	2	–	4
Apothecary	2	–	5
Furrier	2	–	13
Fisherman	2	–	14
Miller	2	–	15
Carter	1	1	16
Gardener	2	–	17
Hunter	2	–	17
Tanner	2	–	40
Horseherd	1	1	–
Midwife	2	–	–
Cathedral sexton	1	–	1
Gunsmith	1	–	1
Healer/prostitute	1	–	1
Registrar	1	–	1
Weaponsmith	1	–	2
Master of the Spital	–	1	3
Pewterer	1	–	5
Administrator	1	–	6
Court scribe	1	–	6
Doctor	1	–	6
Town scribe	1	–	6
'Kitchen' scribe	1	–	7
Bookbinder	1	–	8
Ropemaker	1	–	19
Master of the forest[2]	1	–	25
Clothworker	1	–	183
Bursar	1	–	–
Chancellor	1	–	–
Cheesemaker/trader	1	–	–
Horse-breeder	1	–	–
Priest	–	1	–
Servant	1	–	–
Shepherd	1	–	–
Total	90	20	

[2] Although the twenty-five foresters lived in Eichstätt, several were responsible for woodland away from the town.

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